WHERE THE MOOSE CALLS COMPLETE NOVEL IN THIS ISSUE

ISSUED 1ST AND 15TH EVERY MONTH

TOP-NOTCH

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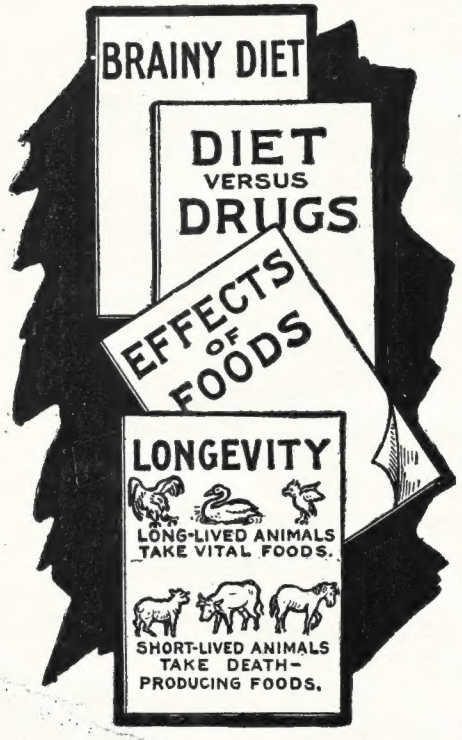
VOL. 6, No. 3 NOVEMBER, 1911

THE TWICE-A-MONTH YOUNG MAN'S MAGAZINE

Popular Educational Food Campaign



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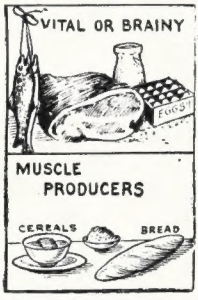

Different Classes of Foods Cause Different Diseases

G. H. Brinkler, Food Expert

I have produced in myself *at will* from time to time such complaints as rheumatism, catarrh, fevers, kidney trouble, blackheads, sores, dandruff, etc., by eating different classes of foods to excess, proving that the waste from each class of foods produces an entirely different disease. For instance, eggs, cream, butter, cheese, milk and salt are mucus-making foods which produce catarrh. Starch and eggs (paste-making foods) in wrong combinations congest and produce headache, dullness, brain fag, etc., while lean meats, green vegetables, and fresh, juicy fruits do not.

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TOP-NOTCH

THE TWICE-A-MONTH YOUNG MAN'S MAGAZINE

Edited by BURT L. STANDISH

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TOP-NOTCH 11-11

TOP-NOTCH
MAGAZINE

VOL. VI NOVEMBER 1, 1911 No. 3

The Ruby of Roo

By Will Gage Carey

It is not the story of a solitary priceless jewel set deep in some baffling mystery; but a delightfully crisp and dramatic tale of the open-air sort, with many a gem of novelty, surprise and fun sparkling in its course. Read here of an American's sojourn among the Fhu-boo-loos, and how his adventure as a football coach caused the tribal stewpot to yawn for him. A splendid story, and a decidedly original one.

(A COMPLETE NOVEL)

CHAPTER I.

FATE'S THEATER OF EVENTS.

COME with me to the Isle of Fhu-boo-loo, nestling like a glistening emerald upon the gently heaving bosom of the South Pacific.

Seagirt, with strands white as the billow crests that ever leap and dance against the sloping shore, flashing in the sunlight, as though coyly beckoning to the gravely nodding palms which fringe the purple hills away inland.

I can't help going on this way about it; simply can't help it. Oh, beauteous isle!

Nevertheless I thank my lucky stars that at this very moment; as I write these words, I am some ten thousand miles or so from both that wonderful island and the big black stewpot of Chief Maori.

Why was I there, then, if life and the mannerisms of the natives were so distasteful to me on the Isle of Fhu-boo-loo? Believe me, it was none of my choosing. A shipwrecked mariner can not always choose just the particular island to be washed ashore on, can he? And when some such unfortunate castaway has had nothing to eat but one small sea biscuit for three days and nights, and he floating around meanwhile upon a slippery spar, he isn't going to be fussy and overparticular where he lands. I know, for it was in such a manner and such a plight that I came to Fhu-boo-loo.

It was just at dawn, when the first faint flush of crimson tinged the horizon, that the spar to which I clung grated upon the pebbly shore of this emerald isle—a refuge, but as to name and location entirely unknown to me at the time.

Weak and exhausted, I staggered out across the gleaming sand, making my way as best I could toward a small grove of palm trees, a little to my right, and a short distance inland.

I reached the grove, and sank down upon the mossy bank of a tiny stream

that trickled joyously through the luxuriant verdure on its way to the sea.

All around me, upon the ground, lay coconuts which had been blown from the treetops during the night.

I reached for one, and, after removing the outer husk, managed at length to pierce one end of the hard shell with a sharp stone, place my fevered lips at the opening thus formed, and drink of the cool, sweet liquid contained within. Nectar! Never, before or since, have I partaken of sustenance so delicious, or which strengthened and refreshed me, as did that cooling draft of coconut milk.

I opened another shell, and then another, not only drinking, but eating as well, for the white, juicy lining was both appetizing and nutritious.

Then, going deeper within the wooded growth and building me a bower of dried boughs, I threw myself down again, and sank at once into dreamless sleep—the slumber of complete exhaustion.

The sun was far up in the sky when I awakened. For a moment I lay there, gazing about me in wonderment; then it all came back to me—the shipwreck, the days and nights of torture upon the floating spar, and how at length, when I had about abandoned hope, I had been thrown up onto dry land.

I began speculating as to whether my chances had been bettered to any great extent, now that I was saved from the waves of the sea, when of a sudden I heard a sound a little to one side that turned my thoughts away from my own sorrows and afflictions, and brought me to my feet in open-eyed wonder. The sound was that of a girl softly crying and sobbing!

I parted the bushes in front of me, and gazed through. Then I beheld her, seated upon a fallen tree trunk, in evident grief and despair, seeking consolation in true womanly fashion—in tears.

She was seated facing me, and even though her hands of hazel hue were held to her weeping eyes, I could see that she was as beautiful as a fawn of the forest—to which, in her short dress made of spotted skins, she bore a striking resemblance.

As I stood thus watching her, she dried her eyes, and sat with her hands clasped before her in her lap, but with an expression of unutterable sorrow upon her face. I could see now that her eyes were large and lustrous, fringed with long, curling lashes, black as night, as was likewise her hair, falling low over her bare, brown shoulders.

What should I do?

If I ventured forth, she would doubtless be too startled to listen to anything I might have to say to her; if I endeavored to retreat from the vicinity, she would, in all probability, hear me, and soon have a horde of dusky savages in pursuit.

At that instant she looked up and beheld me.

She did not cry out; she did not turn and flee. Instead, she got down from her seat, and began making her way toward me; then, when she had reached the little clearing in which I stood, she fairly flew toward me, and threw her arms around my neck.

"Oh, Oswald!" she exclaimed delightedly. "Is it really you—come back to us after all these long years? And are you really, truly glad to see me again?"

CHAPTER II.

THE POISONED ARROW.

It had all happened so suddenly, I stood there as though in a trance. The blood surged to my face as I thought of the little girl I had met during my senior year at West Point—and of certain promises we made each other—and now here was this dark-eyed sylvan nymph so awfully delighted to see me.

"Pardon me, miss," I began; "but before this goes any further, I must assure you that I am not the individual you have taken me for; and, while I am 'really and truly' glad to see you, my name is *not* Oswald, and I have not returned after all these long years. In fact, this is my first visit to your charming little isle, and I mean to give no offense by saying that I hope it will be——"

She interrupted me with a faint scream of surprise. Then she looked long and searchingly into my face. Convinced at length, apparently, of her mistake, she stepped back, covered her eyes with her hands, and I saw that her slight, slender form was all aquiver and trembling from head to foot, though not a sound escaped her pretty lips.

A strange tremor of sympathy for her passed through me, and I placed my hand consolingly upon her head.

"There, there, little girl," I said soothingly; "mistakes will happen. Now, don't cry——"

She wiggled out from under my hand, and glanced up at me with sparkling eyes, exclaiming prettily meanwhile:

"Crying! Not me; I'm laughing! Just to think I should take you for that other—for Oswald; but, then, you must remember he was the only white man I have ever looked upon, except yourself, and—and you're not angry with me?"

"By no means," I answered, perhaps a trifle ardently.

Then a remembrance of the grief to which she was giving way when I first beheld her seemed to return, and, catching me by the arm, she asked anxiously:

"And you will help me—just the same as though you were—were that other white man?"

With those pleading eyes upon me, I think I would have willingly promised to fight single-handed all the natives of the South Pacific.

"Surest thing you know, little one!" I exclaimed. "If you are in trouble, and I can help you, you may count upon me to the limit. Now, tell me: What's the bad news?"

The laughter had all left those glorious eyes of hers by this time. Instead, there was a look of hope and gratitude and faith in me that somehow made me glad that I had stranded on just this particular isle, with the opportunity to help this little sorrowing lady in her distress.

"But if they kill you—for helping me?" she queried to try me.

"I'll take the chance," I answered, "and gladly."

With that, she extended her dainty hand to me, as though to seal the compact; and, as I gently pressed it, she turned aside with the words:

"I must leave you now—for a few minutes. It is a long story I have to tell you, and first I must get you some refreshment, and tell my father—Chief Maori—of your arrival. You wait right here."

With that, she left me, and I settled back to my own reflections. A tumult of conflicting emotions filled my mind.

What could be the trouble from which she had beseeched me to save her? Could it be but a trick to turn me over to the power of the savage tribe which no doubt inhabited the isle? Even as the last thought came to me, I felt ashamed of it. No one could look into *her* eyes and think of aught else save truth and sincerity.

Who was the other white man to whom she referred, and how was it that she—on this distant isle of the Pacific—should speak my own language as if it were her native tongue? It was with these thoughts and vague conjectures that I was occupied, when suddenly they were brought to an abrupt termination.

An arrow whizzed close to my head, striking the tree just behind me, where it remained quivering.

Astonished as I was, I could not refrain from looking at it closely and in detail, because of its peculiar markings. From the feathers on the shaft, halfway to the other end, was a succession of brightly painted rings—alternate black and vermilion! I had never seen such an arrow—but I had heard much of it; it was the poison arrow of the Fhu-boo-loo warriors!

Like a flash, the dreadful truth came over me. I was ashore on the Isle of Fhu-boo-loo, whose natives—head-hunters, man-eating cannibals—were the most feared of any in the South Pacific. A strange, English-speaking race—beautiful of form and face—but black of heart and treacherous as snakes.

Again I heard the twang of a bow; this time the arrow pierced my shirt sleeve; and, filled with resentment toward the young girl whose treachery—as I believed—had brought this horde down upon me, I bounded away into the deeper forest, followed by a cloud of arrows—fortunately none of which struck me—and amid the wild screams and frenzied war cries of the savages who had started in close pursuit.

CHAPTER III.

A QUESTION SETTLED.

As I ran, I noted that the ground before me was a gradual incline, which, slight as it was, made progress difficult for me in my weakened condition.

Already I was beginning to breathe heavily, and I felt that, while I had thus far been able to keep a certain distance from my pursuers despite their utmost efforts to reach me, it would only be a question of a few minutes of such violent exertion when I should sink down exhausted.

To avoid the ascent, now gradually becoming steeper, I made a turn to the right, running in that direction, instead of upward. In making this move, I passed around the corner of an abruptly shelving ledge of rocks, which, for the moment, concealed me from the view of the savages pressing closely behind.

In front, I found myself faced by a narrow ravine, over which a number of logs lay stretched. I darted out upon one of the logs, intent on getting across, but in my mad haste my foot slipped, and I rolled off to one side, alighting in the bottom of the ravine, a distance of some fifteen feet.

Fortunately, the bottom of the ravine was filled with leaves; these broke the force of my fall. Then, hearing the wild shouts of the savages as they rounded the bowlders, I quickly threw an armful of the leaves over my prostrate form, and lay perfectly still, scarce daring to breathe.

On they came!

I heard the patter of their bare feet upon the logs above me! It seemed incredible that they could pass so close and not detect me, and yet, one and all, they passed over, and, screaming, shouting, went plunging on into the forest, whither, so they supposed, I had gone.

Soon the shouts and baffled cries grew fainter and fainter in the distance, until finally the sounds ceased entirely, and all was still about me, save for the twitter of birds and the soft murmur of a waterfall somewhere close by.

Fearing that my pursuers might at any moment return, and possibly search the ravine, which in their haste they had passed by, I began slowly crawling through its somber depths, to which the bright rays of the sun overhead but seldom penetrated.

I had proceeded perhaps a distance of a league in this manner, when of a sudden the ravine ahead of me grew light, and from the roaring of the surf, which I could hear now distinctly, I knew that the chasm through which I had been passing opened directly upon the sea.

More cautious now, I ventured on.

The ravine ended abruptly in a large cavern, or, rather, in a sheltered lagoon bordered on all sides by high cliffs, but with no covering directly overhead; this connected with the ocean by a narrow passageway, rock-bottomed now, but which, at high tide, I knew must be filled with water.

I was about to make my way around the edge of the lagoon, when, at one end, carefully concealed among the reeds and rushes, I discovered the outlines of a sailboat. The mast had been taken out, but lay with the sails in a position for hoisting at a moment's notice.

I climbed aboard. Everything was in shipshape aboard the little craft, even to a stock of provisions sufficient for a cruise of a week's duration. How it came there, I could not even surmise, but this much I had already determined: that as soon as I could lay in a supply of fresh water aboard the craft, and when the tide permitted, there would be a sudden sailing from the Isle of Fhu-boo-loo with myself as master and mate—and crew!

With this end in view, I secured a large gourd from the boat, and began retracing my steps back along the ravine, to a point where I had noticed a small spring bubbling up. I filled the gourd, and was on the point of returning, when a sudden realization came upon me as to what I was about to do.

I was preparing to leave the isle—and desert the little maid whom I had promised to help!

I set the gourd down in the bushes which fringed the spring, then seated myself at one side to think the matter over carefully before going any farther.

In the first place, was it she who betrayed me to the Fhu-boo-loo warriors? Their attack coming so soon after her disappearance might lead one to some such conclusion; and yet, somehow, I was inclined still to trust her; there was a possibility that they had merely chanced upon me.

These points I considered over and over—whether to make my escape while an opportunity presented itself—or go back and give myself up to almost certain torture and death, in an attempt—by no means certain of success—to aid the little maid of the forest, of whose loyalty and sincerity I was by no means absolutely assured.

For a moment I sat there, with my head in my hands; then I arose, and carefully concealed the gourd in the bushes.

I had decided. Come what might, I would go back, and, if it lay in my power, save the little, sorrowing maid from whatever peril surrounded her.

And the cruise of the *Molly O*—for so I had christened the little craft in the lagoon—must await another day for sailing—if *I* was to ship upon her as mate and master.

CHAPTER IV.

LILLOONITA.

I felt better now that the decision was made; in fact, I almost hated myself when I thought how I had hesitated to take the course. Even so, I was by no means desirous of meeting, at once, my former pursuers; and, though I immediately climbed up the sloping side of the ravine, to go in search of the girl, I made my way through the forest with all caution possible.

I had gone but a little distance, when I saw her coming in my direction. She was glancing about her anxiously on all sides, and was evidently looking for me.

I called to her, and she ran forward eagerly.

"You did not wait for me," she began half reprovingly.

I searched her face, but there was no trace of guile upon it. Then, seating herself upon a mossy bank, and drawing me down beside her, she continued:

"You ran away?"

"Yes, I ran—some."

"Why?"

"Because I couldn't fly, I suppose."

She smiled at this, but I could see that she was unconscious of what had transpired since she left me; so I told her all—all except finding the boat, and my first impulse to run away and leave her. She listened with pretty interest, which gradually gave way to a spirit of vexation as I proceeded. When I had finished, she declared impetuously:

"That's old Maori's work! He claims to be my father—to look only to my welfare and happiness. I don't believe him—I don't trust him! He is what you would call a—a——"

"A double-crosser?"

"Yes; I think that is what you'd call him. I told him of your arrival. He was overjoyed! He gave orders for the guest chamber to be prepared for you—and a big feed; then——"

"Then he gave other orders—on the side—for me to be shot so full of arrows I'd look like a fretful porcupine?"

"It looks that way. That just shows how cautious we must be in our planning if you—if we—ever leave Fhu-boo-loo alive!"

"And you want to leave?"

"Oh, how I long to leave—forever!"

"Well," I said, "perhaps you'd better tell me something more about yourself—your troubles, and how I am to aid you. Now, to begin with, what is your name?"

She looked up at me from under her long lashes, and smiled.

"My name? It is *Lilloonitaiaokionikh*——"

"Is it, indeed!" I observed, interrupting her. "Well, that is a nice name, and no mistake; but suppose, for the sake of convenience, we leave off the last few yards of it? Now, *I'm* going to call you Lil-loo-ni-ta—for short. How does that suit you?"

I did not look at her, but I could feel those great, lustrous eyes upon me, as she murmured softly:

"If it pleases *you*—I will consider it a lovely name!"

Not so bad for Fhu-boo-loo, was it?

"Well, Lilloonita," I said, at length, "let's get to the facts: What is it—who is it—that is worrying your pretty little head?"

I must say that—for a woman—she got to the point in mighty short order. Arranging the folds of her leopard skin about her coquettishly, she began:

"Mhorganii, chief of the neighboring island of Roo, has determined to marry me. I hate him! I will die, rather than go to him, for I—I——"

"Go on."

"I love another."

"Yes?"

"I love a warrior of Fantii Isle, a warrior brave and good—and kind—and handsome——"

"Oh, sure!"

"Well, he *is!*"

"His name?"

"His name is Kiowana."

"Um-m!"

"And he is brave——"

"Yes, I think you mentioned that point. And Chief Maori——"

"The chief says I must marry Mhorganii—or be slain by the high priests as a sacrifice to the gods!"

"Why does he insist, if he wishes only your happiness?"

"Because of *the blood-red ruby of Roo!*"

"What is that?"

"It is a great ruby belonging to Mhorganii. It is blood-red, and larger than the egg of the wild pigeon! It glows like the sun that sinks in the western sea. It is like the dawn of day—but to me it brings only darkness and despair!"

"And Maori wants it?"

"He has always wanted it—envied it—craved it! Now, he is planning to sacrifice my love, my soul, my life, to obtain it."

"What are the conditions?"

"Plainly, the ruby for Lilloonitaiaokioni—I mean, for Lilloonita."

"Quite a plan, isn't it!"

"Mhorganii, however, merely to make it appear less like a business deal entirely, has felt safe in changing the terms somewhat, but this brings on more explanations!"

"The plot thickens?"

"Well, yes. I think you may well say that it does."

"Fine! Let's have the rest of the story."

CHAPTER V.

HO FOR THE GRIDIRON!

Lilloonita paused a moment, and began arranging a stray lock of her raven hair—much in the same manner as I'd often seen the little girl do back at West Point, when she came out with her mother to watch the maneuvers, and the breeze would take liberties with her tresses. Then Lilloonita continued—slowly:

"Some years ago a white sailor was wrecked—same as yourself—upon this island. His name was Oswald, and I mistook you for him to-day. I was only a child, but he was kind and good to me, and my heart went out to him, as it has never done toward the one who claims to be my father.

"He had some strange influence over my people—and old Maori; they never offered to harm him. He lived with us for some time. He taught us many things. Then, one day, he and Maori quarreled; that night the white sailor escaped in a boat, and made his way over to the Isle of Roo. Here he was gladly welcomed, for a great rivalry has always existed between the two islands—and they were smart enough to know that he could help them be-

come our superiors, perchance, along certain lines.

"All his regard for us—his former friends—had now turned to hatred. He sought every opportunity to humble the warriors of Fhu-boo-loo. He knew, however, that our warriors were better hunters, runners, swimmers, fighters—because he had already made them so. What could he do?

"At last an idea came to him; he would turn to the field of sports; herein should the warriors of Roo excel all others!"

"Did he make good?" I asked eagerly.

"Well, he certainly made a tribe of trained athletes out of the warriors of Roo. He taught them fencing, boxing, and even got up a series of shell races in the channel. But what made the greatest hit was a game he taught them called football. The whole island simply went crazy over this new form of sport; that's all they could talk about over on the Isle of Roo. After he had them trained to suit him, he selected two teams, and made a grand tour of all the islands around here. The people went wild. Mhorganii was in his glory. And poor old Maori—actually, I thought he would lose his mind through envy at such power and popularity of this rival ruler. But what could he do?"

"But what bearing has all this on present conditions?" I asked.

"I'm coming to that right now," she answered, "and it has everything to do with present conditions here on Fhu-boo-loo. This began some time ago, remember. One day Oswald disappeared. He never returned, but the great game he had established—this game of football—has gone on and on, gaining in popularity with each passing year.

"Mhorganii never lets an opportunity slip to flaunt the skill of his warriors in the faces of all the other island rulers," she went on. "Especially does he love to taunt Maori. And so, even in his bargaining for me—believing himself quite safe in so doing—he has made this offer: The warriors of Roo to play the warriors of Fhu-boo-loo a match game of football. If Fhu-boo-loo wins, Maori gets the ruby of Roo—and I—I am free to marry the warrior of my choice. Should Fhu-boo-loo lose, I am to go to Chief Mhorganii, and, as a balm, the ruby goes to Maori, just the same. You see, he gets the ruby, either way. The game is merely a flaunting, fanciful whim of Mhorganii's. He figures that he can't lose, and yet, by this offer, he can pose as having been fair and generous throughout the whole matter. But oh, poor—poor, little me!"

She covered her face with her hands, and began softly crying, rocking slowly to and fro as she wept.

"Listen, Lil-loo-ni-ta," I said, after she had finished her crying spell, "there are some things I did not learn while at West Point, and some few things I did learn! Now, I don't want to throw any bouquets at myself, understand, but, on the square, girlie, I believe I know just about as much football as the Oswald person ever knew. All you have to do is just say the word, and I'll take hold of these Fhu-boo-loo wallopers and make a football team out of 'em that will throw the biggest surprise into Big Chief Mhorganii he ever knew. He may be breathing at the end of the second half, but, believe me, it will be some days before he can sit up and take nourishment! Do you get me? This chief roozaboo, of Roo, has slipped over just one bluff too many. I think it is up to us—you and me—to call him, and call him hard. Now, how about it?"

In my earnestness and enthusiasm, I had been speaking with a rapidity which was no doubt difficult for her to follow. Her eyes kept getting bigger and bigger as I continued, and when she *did* finally grasp my full meaning—she uttered a little scream of delight, and, holding both of my hands tightly in her own and looking straight up into my eyes, she cried out joyously:

"Oh, will you do that? Wouldn't that be glorious! Do you think we could possibly beat them?"

"Surest thing you know, little one;

what we'll do to those roosters from Roo will be something scand'lous! And now for a little conversational dalliance with Chief Maori. Lead me to him."

CHAPTER VI.

ARRANGING AN AUDIENCE.

Hand in hand, we made our way through the forest in the direction of the palace—she laughing and bright-eyed and trusting me to the limit to do all I'd promised; and me—well, of course, I realized, I suppose, more than did she just what we were up against.

At any rate, I was determined to put on a full front—even if the chills were chasing up and down my spinal column; to think big, to talk big, and trust to Heaven to get away with it, for I knew that many a good-sized pot has been won on a pair of deuces. And I knew that if I lived long enough to get as far as the football affair—well, I was somewhat self-confident *there*.

We had talked so long on the mossy bank, getting a true line on things, that the shades of evening began falling about us as we hurried onward; then, too, after my long fast, I felt nearly famished, and hoped that Maori would be considerate enough to allow me to feast before the big powwow began. For these reasons, we talked but little now, devoting all our strength and energies to getting out of the forest and in the vicinity of the palace before the darkness should be upon us.

At length, like little twinkling fireflies, we could make out the camp fires in front of the bungalows scattered in a sort of semicircle in front of the palace, but of this later domicile, I could as yet see nothing.

"One thing I forgot to mention," observed Lilloonita, as we hurried on toward the twinkling lights: "The people of Fhu-boo-loo are all very friendly to me, and, while they do not know all the details of Maori's scheme to get the ruby, still they surmise that I am in some trouble and am not happy, and have assumed a threatening manner toward their ruler, which has made him somewhat uneasy. For this reason, he has determined that when he gets ready to ship me off to the Isle of Roo, it must be by stealth, and somewhere along the shore, so I have been secretly told, he has a boat concealed, all provisioned, and ready for a quick getaway."

Here I gave a little start, but it escaped her notice.

"I have searched diligently for the boat," she went on, "but without avail. Had I found it, I would have set out to sea in it alone, trusting my life to the waves and tempests rather than meet the fate which Maori has laid out for me."

This, then, was the explanation concerning the boat I had found concealed at the edge of the lagoon. I said nothing to my companion, however, as to my having already discovered it, but I determined, then and there, that when the *Molly O* did set out on her cruise, Maori, chief of Fhu-boo-loo, would not be among those present at the launching.

Now the lights of the camp fires gleamed brightly ahead. A dog barked, then another, finally a whole canine chorus joining in. Lilloonita grasped my arm.

"I think it would be best for you to wait here," she said, in low tones. "I will go on, and have a few words with Chief Maori. If I can make him see that your coming has made it possible to humble the pride of the haughty Mhorganii, your life, for the time being at least, will be safe. We must be bold, yet ever watchful for treachery."

In another moment her slender form had faded from sight in the darkness ahead. I seated myself upon a fallen log to wait.

Presently the dogs ceased their barking, and I knew that Lilloonita had reached the camp, and quieted them. Shadowy forms flitted to and fro in the glare of the camp fires, and the sound of shrill voices reached my ears. A sudden blaze of light leaped up in the murky background of the camp—the palace was illuminated; Lilloonita had lost no time in seeking an audience with Maori.

What would be the outcome? Would the ruler of Fhu-boo-loo seek my immediate extermination, as he had done before? I could only wait and see.

A few moments passed; the commotion in camp seemed to increase.

Torches began flaring, with the sudden beating of tom-toms; a procession was forming; now it swung slowly out, coming in my direction!

Nearer and nearer came the waving torches; the bearers, as well as I could make out, appeared to be priests, dressed in flowing black robes, and each with a long, gray beard reaching nearly to his waist. Before them walked Lilloonita—gravely, but with resolute step and head held high.

A low, weird chant began, as the strange procession proceeded in winding course through the forest.

Now I could see that behind the priests came the Fhu-boo-loo warriors; mighty of form they seemed in the uncertain glare of the torches, with fierce but not wholly ill-favored countenances. Each carried a heavy war club, while the majority were armed with bows and arrows.

I could see nothing of the royal ruler of the isle; evidently Chief Maori considered it considerably beneath his dignity to show more than a passing interest in the mere arrival of a stranded sailor in his domain. Of this I was not sorry. I felt that I needed rest and refreshment, for our first interview would result likely in a mental clash, at the least.

Now they had reached a point not a hundred yards from where Lilloonita had left me standing, and I saw her pause and raise her right hand above her head. At this the procession came to a stop, then assumed an open position, consisting of two lines, facing each other at a distance of about eight feet apart, where they stood, priests and warriors alike, motionless as ebony statues.

Lilloonita came forward, alone, to find me.

"Come," she said, when she had reached my side. "I have done all I could. Chief Maori will allow you to pass before him immediately, for inspection, but he refuses absolutely to talk with you until morning."

We turned and went back to our waiting escort, passing between the two statuelike rows. I thought to myself: "Let those who enter here all hope abandon"—but I walked with head erect, and, I hope, showed no evidence of the strange sinking within my heart.

As we passed, the two rows of priests fell in immediately behind, then the warriors, in turn. I scanned carefully the faces of these latter—these wild savages, who, but a few hours earlier, were chasing me with might and main through the forest, intent only in an endeavor to fill my system full of poisoned arrows. They, too, seemed to recall the circumstance, and they grinned at me amiably now, as though delighted to see that I could take a little joke without getting sore.

Now we were all in line again, winding in and out on the way to the palace; the chant was resumed, and the beating of the tom-toms.

Presently we passed the outer circle of bungalows, and came to a wide avenue leading down past the Palace, before which was a raised platform; from this, surrounded by his personal bodyguard and court attendants, Maori had deigned to inspect the white man—the second who had ever set foot upon his domain.

At this point, Lilloonita motioned to me to pause, while the priests marched on past us, prostrating themselves face downward upon the ground before their ruler. He raised a jeweled scepter; they arose, and fell back a dozen paces, and I was led before him. Amid the silence of all that vast multitude—a hated stranger in a strange land—I stood, face to face with Maori, chief of the Isle of Fhu-boo-loo.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE TEMPLE OF TII.

Morning in Fhu-boo-loo!

From the narrow window of my dungeon tower—where I had been thrown the night before after my in-

spection by Chief Maori—I watched the first faint flush of pink in the eastern sky change to crimson and gold. Then the sun came up out of the sea—large and round, and tinged, it seemed to me—with blood.

What would the day bring forth?

Maori had said not one word to me—simply sitting there in sullen silence on the throne, finally banishing me from his sight with a wave of his scepter. Then they dragged me away, but I had a bright smile from Lilloonita in parting, and in the cell where they thrust me I found a substantial repast, and a soft couch on which to stretch my wearied limbs. So things might easily have been worse.

As I sat looking out my little window, watching the shimmering sea waves dancing in the sunlight, I heard the sound of footsteps before my door, and the next moment the royal guard—six gigantic Fhu-boo-loo warriors in scarlet turbans and waistcloths of leopard skins—stood facing me, while the spokesman advanced and with a low bow announced:

"You are to come with us. Chief Maori awaits you—in the temple of Tii!"

With rapidly beating heart, I followed close behind the guard.

We passed along a narrow corridor leading down to the ground, thence along a side street in the direction of the temple. The hour was early, but a curious throng lined the way to catch a glimpse of me, for only Maori's advisors and favorites were to be admitted within the temple at the powwow.

We reached the structure at length—an imposing-looking building made entirely of bamboo and a strange plaster composed of sand, lime, and seashells, and of a style of architecture suggesting the old Arabic.

Once inside, I was astonished beyond measure at the grandeur, the wealth, and splendor of the furnishings. Not only the floors, but the walls as well, were adorned with mosaics of the finest workmanship, from the beautiful, intricate patterns of which gleamed forth diamonds, rubies, and emeralds!

Costly vases from the Orient, rugs from Persia, tapestry and ivory statues from China—on every side something rare or beautiful caught my eye and held me spellbound. Where could the savage monarch of a cannibal isle have accumulated such an array?

I stood entranced; then a firm hand laid upon my shoulder brought me back to the proper realization of things, and I was hurried forward to a great throne of silver and gold, where Maori, surrounded by his court, awaited me.

There he sat—a large, powerfully built man, with a handsome face singularly lacking in strength and character, it seemed to me. Pompous, conceited, envious of all glory or attention except that which was directed toward his own person, was the way I sized him up, at a glance. Still, there seemed to be nothing absolutely vicious or vindictive about his make-up. I concluded that what he needed most was a good jolly, and a little of the "pink salve" artistically applied, and I followed this system.

I could see that he was making a superlative effort to impress me with his importance, but his attempts at feigning a dignified bearing—such as became royalty—only amused me. I was impressed by two circumstances only—the fact that he had gold-filled teeth, and that he possessed the most astounding vocabulary of up-to-date slang I ever listened to. Of a surety, this was a strangle isle, this Fhu-boo-loo, and a strange Chief Maori in charge thereof.

His greeting to me, however, was the greatest surprise I'd encountered since my arrival, for, leaning forward and extending his big, brown right hand, he said gravely:

"Mitt me, ol' sport. How's things?"

How was that for a salutation from royalty? But he did not outdo me. I gripped the big paw, and I gave it a clinch that made the chief wiggle on the throne, and I answered him:

"Oh, so-so, Your Highness! I don't know as I've got any great holler coming; at the same time, king, I don't

know as I quite catch the joke in connection with your trying to have all the arrows on Fhu-boo-loo Isle shot into me at one time. I think I'd look cute as the human pincushion, but, believe me, emperor, I'd rather——"

"Cut it! Cut it, bo!" he broke in; "cut the chatter! This airy piffle thing comes easy to you, seems like, but it don't make no hit with me, see! I don't fall for it, get me?"

He looked at me hard for a moment, as though considering whether, after all, it wouldn't be best to have me served up at once, *fricassé*—and thus end all further discussion. Then, once more resuming the conversation, he observed: "Speaking of lemons, Petey—how did you get here—and why?"

I paused a moment, to collect my thoughts before replying.

From the back and at either side, a sea of dusky faces surrounded me, and, while the expressions were not what might be termed threatening, their fervid interest and absorbing concern in the affair and its ultimate outcome was, at least, a trifle disconcerting.

Suddenly, from out that dark, intense background, I caught the eye of Lilloonita. She nodded, and smiled down at me encouragingly. That friendly glance helped me amazingly. I began answering Chief Maori, and with as bold a front as possible.

"You ask me how I got here—and why? I think you know full well, Your Highness, the answer to either query. I came a shipwrecked mariner—famished, exhausted, upon a floating spar; I remained, even when I had a chance to escape, that I might help one who is in distress, and——"

"I see," broke in Maori sneeringly; "I'm next. You are little Handsome William-to-the-rescue, nix-nit? You are the original Buttinski, and your strong play is coming to the aid of sorrowing and distressed maidens, what!" He continued to glare evilly down at me; then, leaning over, and shaking his fist in my face, he added: 'Well, let me tell you something, Perciful Proudfoot: This to-the-rescue stall is a great stunt to pull—if you can get away with it. It is an ancient wheeze which has brought home the bacon many times, but it is dangerous! You are liable as not to mess around here trying to spring this rescue gag, and the first thing you know you'll find yourself in a big, black stewpot that we keep for just such ducks as you—and for certain festive occasions!"

He made me mad. It wasn't what he said so much as the way he said it. I felt myself growing hot under the collar, and tingling all over.

Come what might, I was determined to tell this big bully a few things, and in the court language I started in:

"You're a hot sport, *you* are! You think you are just about the warmest proposition in the whole tropical sphere, don't you! Well, you're not! You're a four-flusher, a tinhorn, an ugly wart on the face of the earth; understand? You sit up there, surrounded by two or three hundred warriors with big war clubs, and then you think you are safe in browbeating and bullying a solitary, unarmed, half-famished sailor! You think, having your bodyguard close by, it is a good time to try and show somebody up, don't you? That's your idea of nerve, eh? Say, you make me sick!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THREATENED WITH A TITLE.

I wish you could have seen the expression in old Maori's face when I paused—to catch my breath. He was the most astonished little ruler in the South Pacific realms; but he did not make a whimper. I'll have to give him credit for that, anyway, for, while I expected he would order my immediate execution, he merely looked down at me, and said impassively:

"Anything else, Willie? Don't leave out anything you might feel like saying—now that you've got started good!"

That reply came near getting my nerve. If he had come back roughly, I had a few more hot ones all ready to slip over; as it was, he had me gasping.

"Well, king," I said, at lentgh, "there *is* considerable more to be said—and

I'm hoping we shall get through with it pleasantly. But you might as well get this first as last: You can't hang no rough stuff on me; you may think I'm the fall guy, but I ain't! *You've* got the warriors, and the war clubs, but I'm holding just as strong a hand. I've got a bunch of gray matter back of my map that is working busily all the time —and I am in a position to help you, if you only had sense enough to realize it, but from now on you've got to quiet down, and be a gentleman!"

I looked up at Lilloonita; she was biting her lips to keep from laughing outright at the look on old Maori's face, and I could see that I had made myself rather popular with the crowd, too, by not letting Maori bluff me clear out of the game when he first began to bark.

"Well, Rudolph," observed the chief, at length, "one would almost think—to hear you talk—that *you* were the ruler of Fhu-boo-loo, and I was the goat, but I must admit I sort of take to your nerve. You have made some hit with me, Sid. Now, if you can deliver the goods—if you can help me put one over on that glue-faced gink, Mhorganii, of Roo, why, you can sit in on the rake-off. I will make you Knight of the Wooden Nutmeg—you will be the parlor kid of Fhu-boo-loo! If, however, you fail to come through—well, what I said about that stewpot holds good. Now, to get down to cases: what's your plan?"

Without ado, I told him that I had heard all about existing conditions on Fhu-boo-loo—of the boasts and taunts and challenge of Mhorganii, of Roo—and ended by saying:

"Now, king, if you give me twenty of your best men to work with, I'll pan out a little football team that will trim this tribe from Roo to a frazzle! Are you with me?"

All the time I'd been speaking, the chief, as well as the others standing around, had been getting more and more interested and excited over the proposition. When I'd finished, a whoop of delight went up from the throng, in which the chief himself joined lustily. I knew I had them going.

"What's your orders?" said the chief, when things had quieted a bit. "From now on, until after the great game, what you say goes!"

"In that case," I answered, "my first order is this: Send a special messenger at once to Roo, accepting the challenge of Mhorganii, with the stipulation that the game is to be played on Fhu-boo-loo Island, one week from to-day; that Roo is to furnish the ball to be used in the game, also a ball for us to use in practice, the same to be brought back by the messenger."

Another whoop of delight from the frenzied rooters greeted this evidence of getting down to business, and I added: "One thing more: Have the twenty men—suitable applicants for a position on the team—at the door of my apartments at seven in the morning."

With that, and amid profound cheering, the meeting broke up. I lingered behind for a moment to have a word with Lilloonita. She made her way toward me with face aglow.

"Oh, it was splendid!" she exclaimed rapturously in my ear, and pressing my hand closely in her own. "And, oh, we *must* win next Saturday!"

"We'll win!" I returned assuringly, and made my way slowly down the street to the apartments assigned to me, to think out the details and plan of battle for the great game with the warriors of Roo.

CHAPTER IX.

FORMING THE FHU-BOO-LOOS.

Next morning, when I emerged from my doorway, the one person in sight was Chief Maori.

It was shortly after sunrise—fully an hour before I expected my twenty candidates for the team, but evidently Maori had been patiently awaiting my appearance for some time. He was seated upon a bamboo divan, in the shade of a banyan tree, and invited me, by a wave of his hand, to a seat beside him. He looked wan, worn out.

"Good morning, chief," I said, accepting his invitation. "How do you find yourself this morning?"

"Only moderate," he answered. "I don't suppose I got two hours' sleep all night long!"

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Well, this football thing has got me going. I'll be on Woozy Boulevard for fair if this thing keeps up."

"Mustn't take it so seriously, chief," I said consolingly. "You just take things easy like, and leave the worrying to me."

He looked at me a moment without speaking; then observed gravely:

"Ethelbert, I'm considerably older than you, and my experience has been this: The world is composed mainly of just two things—what you don't want and what you can't get! Now, let that sink in, and then decide if it is not straight dope. In this case, above all things on earth, I want that game. Will I get it? Well—perhaps."

I saw that he seemed to be in a pensive, possibly responsive, mood, so I resolved to make one plea for little Lilloonita.

"Chief," I began, "isn't there some way we can arrange this without having the game? Can't we——"

He cut me short.

"No chance!" he exclaimed heatedly. "What's the matter, Alphonso? Getting cold feet already? On the square, Horatio, I didn't take you for a quitter!"

"It's this way, chief," I answered, in defense: "In any game—between *any* teams—there is one feature you can't bank on; that is the element of luck! For example, take two baseball teams in the big league—one leading the league perchance; the other the tail-ender. Well, an important series comes up—a deciding game, say. Naturally, you'd expect the leaders to clean up those cellar champs, but what happens? Like as not, that team of misfits will jump onto the real gazabos and beat them to a custard. Why? Surely not because the trailers have the better team; a boob could see the two teams are not in the same class. It was simply the element of luck getting in its deadly work. Now, suppose we go up against these riotous Roos—and luck should——"

Maori interrupted impatiently.

"Look here, Archibald, we've gone too far into this thing to renig now. We are going to have that game—and I am banking on you not to show, but to win; and if you don't win—well, old scout, you'll think Hades has broke loose on the Isle of Fhu-boo-loo!"

I saw that he had misconstrued my plea; that it would be worse than useless to argue in the hope of helping Lilloonita. So I reached over and grasped his hand.

"Maori," I said fervently, "you've heard the last murmur out of me; from now on I've one thought only in mind—to whip the everlasting stuffing out of the roosters of Roo!"

At that moment, a band of Fhu-boo-loo warriors came swinging around the corner—the prospective football squad, the material from which I was to pick a winner, and, in all truth, they looked good to me.

They greeted me effusively, and I could see that they were one and all dead set on making the team; that I might have a small riot on my hands when it came to weeding them out, but I figured that those of the twenty who didn't make the team I could put on as substitutes, and thus let them down easy.

First of all, I inquired if there was any suitable field upon which to play. They told me of one which was used, at times, for some of their marching maneuvers, and there we made our way.

A crowd, meanwhile, had gathered around us, and were trustingly expectant of going right along with us. I couldn't see it that way.

"Chief," I said, "to get the best results, it will be necessary to have this mob kept back—at least, until I get things running right. We must have the field to ourselves!"

A howl of disappointment went up from the crowd at this, but they quieted when Maori assured them that it would

be only a matter of a few days, and they could accompany us out to the field, and watch every play; and I took my squad, and departed.

The scene of the prospective battle was all that could be desired—a smooth, level plateau, from which arose a series of low foothills, forming a natural amphitheater. When properly marked off, I knew that we should have a gridiron impossible to improve upon.

First of all, I paced off one hundred yards, placed my squad in line; then, with watch in hand, timed them as they covered the distance. One of them—a slim, wiry fellow named Maubi—made it in a little less than ten seconds! Another—Katunka—went the route in ten seconds flat. I was well satisfied with the result.

"That's fair enough," was my mental reflection; "I now have my ends." Calling the two out before me, I said: "Maubi, you shall have a try-out at right end; and you, Katunka, at left!"

They fairly leaped about in their joy, and the others came crowding up, urging another test, hoping to qualify. It was no slight task deciding, as the material all showed so promising. Finally, however, I picked out a swarthy giant named Orispo for center, and two others, strong as young bulls, yet quick and active, for right and left guard.

Soon I had the places all filled, but I gave them to understand that on the morrow I would put in a call for more men from which to form a second team, and that any time a member of this second team showed more class than his opposite man on the first team—there would be a sudden shift.

Just before noon, I led my happy, hilarious, cavorting band back to camp. I felt more than satisfied; only one position seemed doubtful to me, and that was my quarter back. The chap I had chosen for that place was ideal, from a physical standpoint, but I feared that he was a few points shy on the mental requirements. I worried about this no little.

During the afternoon, we measured and marked off the field, and erected the goal posts. These latter, while of regulation height, were naturally crude, being made of young saplings, stripped and peeled.

This work completed, I gathered my squad in a circle about me on the ground, and we discussed football and the fine points of the game; for, while not one of them had ever participated in a contest, they had all watched the Roo teams with envious eyes, and had studied out every play.

I was delighted to find that my work of rounding out a team—one that really understood and could execute teamwork—would be far less laborious than I had imagined.

CHAPTER X.

A TERRIBLE RIGHT SHANK.

When we returned to camp, at dusk, we were at once surrounded by the entire populace. Even Maori himself could scarce restrain his eagerness to hear every detail of the day's try-out. He was as tickled as could be when I told him that he need have no fear as to the result; that we should have a team that would make a showing in any sort of company.

The messenger had already returned from Roo.

He reported that our acceptance of their challenge had been greeted at first by yells of derision, but when they had listened to some of the particulars, they began giving earnest attention.

The messenger told them nothing regarding myself, but he did let them know that the Fhu-boo-loos were in hard training. Doubtless they surmised that a coach had been unearthed from somewhere. Finally, so the messenger said, our offer was accepted with shouts of delight on the part of the Roosters, and immediate and elaborate preparations were at once begun for the big event.

Also, they sent back with the messenger a football. I was much interested in this. It was of regulation size and shape, skillfully constructed of an inner ball of thin skin with an outer covering of leather. There was a rude valve, by which to fill it with air, and

a trial punt convinced me that it was fully as live as any ball I had ever seen in play.

Then another doubt assailed my mind. I had punted the ball with the toe of my shoe; could one of my Fhu-boo-loos possibly drive it any distance with a bare foot?

It was a vexed question. The more I thought it over, the more it bothered me. Dark as it was, I decided I could never wait until morning to find out about the matter. Calling to a lean, lanky, loose-jointed fellow—whose physique, or, rather, lack of it, had utterly barred him from the competition, but whose big, solemn eyes had followed my every move with doglike faithfulness and persistency—I said:

"Come here. I want to see you punt this pigskin."

With eyes now beaming at the wholly unlooked-for honor, he grabbed the ball from my hand, gave one swing of that great, long, dangling right leg of his, and bing! Off went the ball through the air, end over end, hurtling through the bright moonlight, a distance of forty-five yards!

I looked at him and gasped.

"Look here," I managed to say, at length; "can all the Fhu-boo-loos punt like that?"

"Don't know," he answered; "*I* can—and better!" he added, but with no trace of boastfulness.

I called out some of my original squad. Each punted his best; none sent it over fifteen or twenty yards. I had simply stumbled on a find; this great, lanky gawk, with a natural swing to that leg of his, was simply indispensable. I turned to him and asked, calmly as I could:

"What is your name?"

"*Floo-bloo,*" he answered.

"Well, *Floo-bloo,*" I said, "you don't look it, but I believe you are just the boo-boo we need to boot that ball for us into the middle of next week in the coming game with the Roosters. Could you be persuaded to take a hand—or, rather, that right foot of yours—into this game?"

I had expected a wild burst of sentimental gush and vaporings over this Heaven-sent offer, but it was only in his eyes that Floo-bloo ever tipped his hand as to his real emotions, and to my query he replied simply:

"Bet yer life!"

And so it was decided, there and then, that whomever I had to shake off, to make a place for him, Floo-bloo would be there with that long-heaving right shank.

I made my way to my apartments, whistling contently. On the way I met Maori. He pretended that the meeting was purely accidental, but I knew he'd been waiting around for me at least two hours.

"How's things?" he asked innocently, to draw me out.

"Fine as silk!" I answered fervently, then added in a stage whisper as I passed along:

"Bet your last nickel on the Fhu-boo-loos!"

CHAPTER XI.

JUST BEFORE THE BATTLE.

The following morning, just as I had finished dressing, I heard a gentle tap at my door; I opened it, and beheld Lilloonita.

She was looking more beautiful and bewitching than usual, for a faint flush had tinged her cheeks, and from the sparkle in her eyes I surmised that she had something out of the ordinary upon her mind.

"Well, Lilloonita," I said pleasantly, "what's up now?"

"*You* are up, for one thing, I'm glad to see," she answered, laughing, "and I've got a favor—a very great favor—to ask of you!"

"What is it?"

"There's a man I want you to put on your team!"

"Who is he?"

"Kiowana—my sweetheart!"

"Well, I'll be——"

"Oh, no—you needn't be," she broke in; "you will be glad I brought him, when you see him."

"Where is he?"

She turned outside the door, and

spoke something; in response, a young warrior immediately appeared, bowing low before me.

"This is Kiowana," she said simply.

One glance was all I needed; a little under medium size, quick, supple as a cat, with a clear eye, denoting a quick-moving brain behind it; an aggressive set of the jaw—and a certain self-confidence and absolute calmness under my searching and none too friendly scrutiny—it was all I wanted. I had my quarter back.

"But Maori," I said dubiously, "will he permit——"

"Maori will never know," broke in the girl; "he will be so excited by the time the game starts he won't know the difference if you play a Chinaman on the team!" She laughed cheerily at this, then added solemnly: "Kiowana heard of the great game—and the stakes to be played for—and he came at once, to implore you to permit him to play—for my sake!"

"You shall, Kiowana," I said feelingly. "Be at the practice field an hour from now. I know that when the big game comes off *you* will play to win!"

They both thanked me, and turned to leave, with Lilloonita laughing back at me over her shoulder.

The practice that day was long and grueling. I put them through every stunt I knew; they pulled on the bits like thoroughbreds, and begged for more.

Tackling, bucking the line, running with the ball, working the forward pass, the criss-cross, the fake pass, practicing signals, and interference; everything I tried they more than made good on. I was proud of that bunch, you may be sure. I found myself wishing that some of the old West Point crowd could just drop in for a few moments and see that work-out.

One thing, however, I kept under cover; that was the punting of old Floo-bloo.

I knew what he could do; he didn't need any special coaching; and, if there happened to be any Rooster spy around, I didn't want him going back home and tipping it off to his mates about my star punter. That was to be a little surprise to spring when most needed; and, just on the quiet, it *was* needed—and needed badly.

The next day I let the eager, excited populace come out to witness the scrimmage between the two teams. For a few moments they watched in absolute silence; then, as they saw things going smooth as clockwork—the wonderful defense, the perfect tackling and interference—a cheer went up that I thought surely must have been heard over on the Isle of Roo. A few moments longer they watched, then one by one they began hurriedly leaving. A pang of disappointment seized me. What could be the matter? I turned to Chief Maori, who still held his ground, completely absorbed. "Why are they leaving, chief?" I asked. "Don't they like it?"

"'Like it!'" he repeated; "sure they like it! That's why they left; they have gone to get together everything they possess, or can borrow, beg, or steal—to bet on the game Saturday!"

Need I say that I felt better?

The days following were spent much the same way, only practice was still more arduous, and excitement and expectancy increasing hourly. I had my team trained to the minute—something which never could have been accomplished in the length of time, had it not been that each member physically was practically in perfect form at the start. The fine points of the game they took to as a duck to water. And Floo-bloo—I let him practice some at the goal posts after the others had all gone home; and, frankly, that boy was a pippin.

Meanwhile Lilloonita went about, happy as a lark. She knew we'd win; how could any team beat one like ours? Dear little trusting girl! How could she know that the training given the Roos was of the very highest possible order; that they were up to every trick of the game; that they were athletes, fleet, powerful, resourceful, playing for their very lives? For Morghanii would accept no excuse for defeat, and the loss of bride as well as prestige. Per-

haps, after all, it was best she didn't know. As for me, I felt at the time that with an even break of luck we could hold them, but it would be close, uncomfortably close.

On the evening before the big game, I had been talking with old Maori, who by this time was well-nigh beside himself with excitement and anticipation. He had just been saying that we couldn't lose, and then he turned to me with a darkening brow, and observed:

"I just want to say this, now, while we're on the subject. You have more'n made good—so far—Claude, but should things happen to go wrong to-morrow—well, you know—business is business, and my people, much as they love you now, will be virtually ruined by defeat. It would probably go hard with you. I may say—much as I'd hate to see such a thing—it would be the stewpot for yours!"

"And Lilloonita?" I asked.

"She will marry Mhorganii at once—according to the early schedule—should we meet defeat!"

I sat with my head bowed in my hands.

"Don't take it so hard, Gwendover," said the chief, laying his hand on my head; "you may not have to meet the fate that——"

"Oh, it isn't of myself I'm thinking," I broke in; "it's of the little girl. If after the few days of happiness, she should have to go to Mhorganii! Look here! Do you know what *you* are!" I cried out, grasping the chief by the arm convulsively, forgetting myself entirely in my misery of mind. "You're nothing but an old——"

"Now, now, Wilhelm—calm yourself," he chipped in. "You told me once before, I believe, in the temple—what I am. I don't hold it against you, son. I know what a stress of mind you are naturally laboring under. Ah, well, to-morrow will decide all! And now, *adios*, little angel face—and pleasant dreams!"

I was mad enough to have given him a speeding kick. He didn't believe there was one chance in a million of losing the game on the morrow; he had implicit and abiding faith that he was certain to humble the pride of his ancient rival, Mhorganii; he was satisfied now; my brain—and the skill and strength of the Fhu-boo-loos—would redound to *his* glory on the morrow! He merely mentioned the stewpot—well, just to teach me my place, and keep me from becoming unduly gay.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BATTLE BEGINS.

The day broke bright and clear. Long before sunrise, the people of the isle were astir. Never in the memory of the oldest inhabitant had the entire populace been aroused to such a state and flurry of excitement and anticipation. Nothing was talked of but football, nothing looked forward to excepting the great game.

I had my team out for early morning practice. My spirits rose as I watched them—a machine, steady, plodding, irresistible, yet withal a thinking machine.

"Well, the Roosters *may* win," I reflected, as I watched my line and swift-speeding ends, "but they will have to go some."

By ten o'clock I had my team back in camp, resting in the shade of the palace. The feeling of confidence was strong within them, but I was careful to see to it that they were not overconfident.

"Boys," I said to them, as a score of pretty maidens served us with dinner—"boys, you can win from these Roosters. You *will* win, but you've got to play like Sam Hill to do it!"

About one o'clock a great tumult and shouting came from the direction of the north shore. The hosts of the enemy were arriving. There came to our ears the sound of triumphant cheers, as though the Roos considered the battle already won; the beating of tom-toms, and the hoarse, strident tones of alien voices. I looked hurriedly around me at the members of my team; not one appeared the slightest bit flurried or uneasy. I was glad that the momentary sinking in my own heart at the sound

of all the noise and tumult of the arriving team was a tremor unfelt, unknown by them.

"Now, lads," I said, when the first ranks of the hostile crowd appeared over a neighboring rise, "give three cheers for the Fhu-boo-loos, and then we'll hike for the field!"

They gave the cheers.

"Nothing wrong with your lungs, at any rate," I said, and, leading the way, we broke into a run for the scene of battle.

We arrived at the field, and found that the foothills on all sides were already black with a seething, restless mass of humanity. The contingency of Roo rooters and supporters, taking a short cut from the shore, had already secured their seats. At present, they sat silent and inert, but it was only the calm before the storm, for they were simply awaiting the appearance on the scene of the Roo team—which had taken a longer way around—before breaking out in the wild tempest of tumult and applause which soon followed.

We took our position near one end of the field, directly in front of the royal box occupied by Chief Maori. A moment later, and the Roosters were marching grandly out upon the field.

It was then I beheld our opponents, face to face, for the first time. Truly, they were a magnificent body of men, well set up, superbly muscled, yet lithe and supple as tigers. They, in turn, gazed curiously at the Fhu-boo-loos, and, while they expressed no open contempt, I imagined that they fancied they had little to fear from us; that they would crush us, and outplay us from the very kick-off.

A low hum of expectancy hung over the vast multitude, broken now and then by some high, shrill voice offering his wagers on the team of his choice.

The Roosters were in charge of Mhorganii himself; soon I saw him striding over in my direction, together with the referee—the latter being a chief from a near-by neutral island.

The ball had been placed in the center of the field.

Mhorganii nodded to us condescendingly as he drew near.

The referee got down to business at once.

"We will flip a coin," he said, turning to me.

The coin spun in the air.

"Tails!" I shouted, as it fell.

The referee bent over the coin.

"Heads it is!" he exclaimed.

Mhorganii chose the kick-off.

The Roosters assumed their respective positions, Mhorganii going to the side lines to keep in close touch with his players.

"Now, lads," I said, "get at 'em!" and amid the rousing cheers of Maori and his party in the royal box, the Fhu-boo-loos scampered out to the far side of the field.

A strange silence had fallen over the great assembly.

Then——

Thud!

The pigskin was flying; the game was on!

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FIRST SCRIMMAGE.

It was the gigantic center who had punted, and he drove the ball to our fifteen-yard line.

A wild cheer went up from the Rooster supporters, but it died in their throats, for they saw old Floo-bloo catch the ball, and, with a mighty swing of that dangling right leg, send the sphere sailing back to the Roos' ten-yard line—a magnificent punt.

Mhorganii fairly gasped in astonishment. The Roosters themselves seemed dazed for the moment; they had little expected to go up against such punting as that! And the Fhu-boo-loo crowd yelled and shrieked its delight.

Again the ball was booted—this time by the Roos' left guard. It was a low, hurtling drive that Kiowana beat down the field, falling on the ball. The play was now at the thirty-five-yard line, with the ball in our possession.

The teams lined up for the first scrimmage.

With tense, drawn face, Kiowana

clutched the ball, preparatory to giving his signals.

Again a hush fell upon the throng, broken abruptly by old Maori himself, who called out defiantly:

"Fool 'em, kid! Best little draw back in the world!"

He looked about him grandly, as though to find one who dared dispute him.

Lilloonita grasped his sleeve.

"Chief," she whispered, "you don't mean 'draw' back; you mean quarter back!"

Maori looked down at her scornfully.

"*I* know what I mean," he said fiercely; "quarter back, draw back, half back, or flare back—it's all the same to me what you call him. He's the goods."

And now, sharp and distinct—came the signals of little Kiowana: "Two hundred! Ninety-nine! Thirty-seven! Eighty-six!" Then swift, sure, he snapped the ball; the next second Katunka was speeding with it around the Roos' end.

I glanced at the Fhu-boo-loo section. A cheer leader stood out in front; in response to his frantically waving arms, the throng waved in unison flags, canes, and tiny pennants attached to bamboo sticks; a pretty sight, and an inspiring one. Then came *the* yell, given with a vehemence that echoed from all the surrounding hills:

"Who, who, who's true blue? Fhu-boo-loo, Fhu-boo-loo! Boo-hoo-hoo-o-o-o!"

Silly? Possibly so, but I've heard a whole lot of village yells in the States considerably more nonsensical, and, believe me, the way this bunch rendered it was enough to put life into an Egyptian mummy!

But this time even the systematic rooting of the Fhu-boo-loo crowd was without avail; Katunka was downed with a gain of less than three yards, and so heavily that he lost the ball, a Rooster falling upon it.

Again they lined up for a scrimmage.

Could we hold them—those giant, swarthy Roosters?

The next few moments would tell. As those two grim lines crouched before each other—every muscle strained, every nerve tense—our fates, my life, was hanging in the balance.

I heard again the voice of old Maori, urging, imploring; and, above all the din and uproar, the plaintive tones of little Lilloonita:

"Hold them! Oh, hold them!"

They attempted to smash through our center; the line swayed and trembled. Orispo went down, and the Roo carrying the ball was pushed right over him, yet he was downed without making any material gain. We were holding them!

Mhorganii, on the side lines, was dashing up and down like a madman. Why was it his team was not smashing, ripping up the line before them as they had always done? Surely, they must strike their gait before long now, and carry everything before them down the field.

In the next scrimmage the ball went to the Rooster right half; he dashed with it straight at Katunka, left end. Running with him were the half back, full back, and quarter back—the first two, fellows with tremendous shoulders and mighty strength, making a well-nigh irresistible interference. The Roos' line held like a stone wall. The right half was almost around the end before the Fhu-boo-loos knew who had the ball.

The Roos' throng on the hills arose en masse, shrieking and cheering.

Katunka tried to stop the runner; a straight-arm jolt sent him sprawling.

"Now, you're working!" shouted Mhorganii delightedly.

Maori had likewise seen the strong-arm play—and as it was *his* man who went down, he was justly indignant.

"What is this," he jerked out wrathfully, "a football game or a prize fight?"

"You'll think it's a massacre in about a minute!" was Mhorganii's quick retort. The Rooster rooters yelled and howled approvingly.

"Oh, Kiowana, hold 'em!" came a sweet voice, which I recognized on the instant; then a tumult and roar from the combined forces which made the

picking out of any particular vocal effort impossible.

Orispo, who had fallen back, came at the runner furiously, who swerved this way and that to avoid being tackled.

Orispo leaped through the air!

He caught the runner around the knees, and brought him down with a crash, but the ball had been advanced, and was now on the center line.

The Roosters then sent a flying wedge against our line; it went through for a slight gain. "Smash 'em again!" shouted Morghanii, and the play was repeated with slightly better results. Our line was surely weakening against those battering-ram attacks of the Roos.

Now they smashed against our right guard. A wail of distress went up from the home crowd. The ball had gone through for a gain of seventy yards.

Could nothing stop that crushing advance?

Down the field they pushed our battered, demoralized line, every play they attempted resulting in a gain. Maori was silent now, looking sullen and revengeful. Mhorganii was dancing about in delight. And little Lilloonita! It was some time before I had courage to glance in her direction. When I did, I saw her standing there like a drooping flower.

"Poor little girl!" I thought. "And this was to be your happy day!"

Now the Roosters were attempting another wedge at our center. This time the man with the ball not only got through, but got clear of the line with it.

A loud scream of applause went up from the Roos' section on the hills. "Go—go—go!" they yelled. "A touchdown—a touchdown!"

The runner skillfully evaded those nearest him, and seemed about to break through with a clear field before him.

"Stop him; stop him!" came that plaintive voice from the hills, and I groaned inwardly.

Suddenly a silence fell upon the throng. The excitement was now too intense for sound, for close behind the Rooster there leaped a Fhu-boo-loo runner. It was Maubi, running with the speed of a deer!

Down the field they dashed, the foremost runner straining every nerve and muscle to reach the goal, and Maubi slowly, surely gaining on him every yard.

The throng on the hills sat spellbound!

Now, Maubi was but six yards behind—five yards, four. It seemed then that he could not possibly lessen the distance. Then he was three yards behind—two, and the next moment he had hurled himself through the air as though shot from a catapult.

It was the hardest tackle possible to make—this straightaway sort—but he downed the runner, the ball rolling off to one side. Coming from behind like a flash, Kiowana scooped it up, and dashed back toward the Rooster goal.

It was now the Fhu-boo-loos' turn to cheer, and they made the most of it, the cheer leader nearly tying himself in a knot; yet above all the roar I could make out that one voice, shouting joyously:

"Kiowana! Oh, I knew—I knew you would!"

But the joy of the Fhu-boo-loo rooters was short-lived.

Nearly the whole of the Roo team was now in a position to attack Kiowana. He skillfully dodged the first three who attempted to tackle, but in trying to swerve to avoid the fourth he ran straight into the gigantic Roo center, and came crashing to earth. It was still our ball, however, and on our forty-five-yard line.

The play had been wild and frantic—the kind that sets first one bunch of rooters and then the other to screaming.

Weary and panting, the teams lined up again.

The Fhu-boo-loos, having the ball, tried smashing the line.

Quick, clear, steady came the signals from our little quarter back. It was a frenzied moment, but he was calm and collected, and his coolness was steadying the whole team behind him.

Twice the Fhu-boos bucked the center, making a slight gain each time. Not wishing to lose the ball on downs, however, Kiowana snapped the ball to Katunka for a punt. The line held, then wavered, and the Roo center broke through, but not until Katunka's toe had sent the pigskin sailing.

It was a great punt, and brought the rooters to their feet, but they soon quieted when they saw the Roosters' guard catch the ball, and punt it far back into Fhu-boo-loo territory. Maubi sprang for it, and missed; the quick Roo end grabbed it up, and, turning, sped like the wind for the Fhu-boo-loo goal.

Already the timekeeper had his whistle to his lips; the runner carrying the ball dashed between the posts for a touchdown, and the whistle screamed. The first half was over.

Roosters, five; Fhu-boo-loo, nothing!

CHAPTER XIV.

COUNCIL OF WAR.

So swiftly had events transpired during the last few moments of play, there had been little opportunity for either cheers or groans; now, however, when a realization came of what had occurred in that fatal interim, the multitude gave full vent to its feelings. The Rooster crowds yelled and shouted; the Fhu-boo-loos sank back in their seats, silent, discomfited.

The first half, while it had resulted disastrously for us, had taught me much. I was now convinced that if we hoped to win, it must needs be through a decided change of tactics; we could never gain by plunging against that stone-wall defense of the Roos.

I passed close by the royal box.

Maori saw me, but he ignored my presence entirely. Lilloonita leaned over, hoping for some word of cheer and consolation. "Don't worry yet, little girl," I whispered; "there is another half yet, and we've got something up our sleeve that's going to surprise them. But I wish you'd come down to the side lines during this next half; it's important, in fact, that you do."

Then I went out to where my team lay stretched upon the ground. I rejoiced to see that they were still confident, and I told them of the changes I thought necessary in our tactics. Then, as I turned to leave, I bent over old Floo-bloo, and said:

"Old boy, if we have any show whatever on earth to win this game—it must be you who will do it. Are you equal to it?"

He looked me straight in the eyes, and I could have hugged him for the answer he gave me, yet all he said was:

"Bet yer life!"

No element of boastfulness there—just an honest self-confidence, an assurance that made good.

The intermission ended, the whistle blew for the second half.

Floo-bloo kicked off!

It was a beautiful drive, the ball going to the Roos' five-yard line!

The man who got the ball did not attempt a return punt; instead, he began making his way down the field, running with splendid interference. When at last he was finally downed, he had made a gain of thirty yards.

Here they lined up for the scrimmage.

Again came that smashing play against our center, but we had made a shift of players which worked for the better. After three unsuccessful trials by the baffled Roos, the ball came to us on downs.

But we, in turn, could make but little gain. Once Kiowana sent Maubi around the end for a gain of ten yards, but we soon lost it.

Backward, forward, the two great machines swayed, first one side and then the other having a momentary advantage.

Though five points behind, the Fhu-boo-loo rooters never gave up; the cheer leader cavorted frantically at any fancied gain, and his frenzied followers responded bravely to every call.

And yet there was no disguising the fact that a feeling of depression, if not despair, had settled over the Fhu-boo-loo sympathizers and faithful adherents.

Seeing that we could make but inappreciable gains either through the line or around the Roos' ends, Kiowana decided on trying out the play we'd talked of during intermission.

With quick, steady fingers, he snapped the ball back; it was passed to Floo-bloo; then, before the Roos had any chance to break through and block the play, he had attempted the stunt called for—a goal from the field.

True and straight the ball sped, crossing the bar with room to spare. A perfect field goal, and from the forty-five-yard line!

Good old Floo-bloo! They still talk of that punt down there in those sunny isles of the South Pacific, or I miss my guess. With that punt came new life and hope.

"Who, who, who's true blue? Floo-bloo—Floo-bloo— boo-hoo-hoo-o-o-o!" rang out the chorus of home rooters.

Maori was beside himself with joy.

"Best little switch back in the world!" he shouted.

Lilloonita started to tell him that Floo-bloo was not a switch back, but a half back, but she was too happy to find fault with any living soul just then, and simply joined in the frantic cheering and applause.

Again the ball was placed on the center line. The Roosters kicked off; then, after a series of punts back and forth, the teams lined up again for scrimmage on the Roos' forty-yard line.

It was at this point that Lilloonita left the royal box, and came down to where I was standing on the side lines.

"Oh, wasn't it glorious, that punt of Floo-bloo's!" she said, with eyes sparkling.

"It was some punt," I answered, "and little Kiowana, too," I added, "is playing out his very heart to win!"

She flushed prettily at this, and at once became very interested in the play out upon the field. Of one thing I was certain; it was that the Roosters were fast tiring. The score still being in their favor, five to three, they were playing almost wholly on the defensive.

Once a run around our end for a gain of fifteen yards brought the Roo crowd screaming to their feet, and we gained about the same distance by straight plunges through the line; so that honors kept about even, and the assembled hosts yelled and cheered alternately in a frenzy of trepidation and excitement.

Mhorganii had lost much of his confidence; things were getting most too close for absolute comfort and assurance.

"Watch out for that skinny gink!" he kept warning his men. "Play close now, and don't let *him* get another good swing at that pigskin!"

The time was flying by, yet the ball remained near the center of the field, for the most part.

"Twenty-eight, nineteen, twenty-one!" came the signal from Kiowana, and around the end flashed Maubi with the ball. He was downed, with a gain of only three yards, and the play left the ball almost at the extreme right side of the field, and on the forty-yard line, close to where Lilloonita and I were standing.

"Five minutes to play!" came the call.

"'Five minutes!'" I repeated, with sinking heart. It was a pitifully short time.

The throng was in an uproar.

"Oh, do something!" pleaded the frantic girl by my side.

I spoke quickly to Floo-bloo, but in a tone that Kiowana would also hear. "We have one chance left, old man," I said, as calmly as I could; "will—will you try it?"

Another field goal—at that distance, and at that angle! The thing seemed impossible, but it was our only chance.

"Will you *try?*" I repeated quickly.

"Bet yer life!" came the answer, and we waited breathlessly.

The Roosters knew the play that was coming as well as did our own team. With one mighty rush, they strove to break through and block the kick as soon as the ball was in play. The line held, wavered, then broke. Too late; the ball was even then sailing away toward the goal posts.

The throngs on the hills were stand-

ing now; the players themselves stood motionless as statues.

The result of the game depended upon this one play.

Across the field soared the ball; it seemed a trifle high, but it was settling fast.

Which would it bring—victory or defeat?

Down swerved the ball.

It struck the inner side of the left-hand goal post; then—wonder of wonders!—it bounded to the bar, *where it remained*, momentarily impaled upon a small twig of the rough-trimmed sapling—trembling, wavering, first on one side of the bar, and then on the other.

CHAPTER XV.

FLIGHT FROM THE FIELD.

There are some things more than mortal man can stand; this was one. If that ball flopped over and fell on the near side—it meant the stewpot for me!

I simply could not await the outcome. Grabbing Kiowana by the arm, and, pulling him from the field, I clasped the willing Lilloonita by the hand; and then, while the throngs watched the vacillations of that tantalizing ball, we fled from the scene.

I headed straight for the ravine leading to the sea; with Lilloonita's help, I had no trouble in finding it. Then, with all possible haste, we made our way along toward the shore.

We had gone but a little distance, when a mighty shout went up from the ball field.

The ball had fallen!

Had we met defeat—or victory?

We dared not wait to see, but made our way onward with redoubled speed.

I told them of the boat as we ran.

"And where will you take us?" queried Lilloonita.

"Anywhere," I answered; "far enough away so that you will never be bothered more by Mhorganii, chief of Roo!"

She pressed my hand fervidly at this, and we hurried on to reach the *Molly O* while there was yet time.

We found the little boat, just as I had left it, but the tide was out; we would have to wait at least until dark before we could embark.

In our constant fear of discovery, the time seemed to drag, but after we had laid in a supply of fresh water, and just as darkness had fallen around us, we were able to cross the channel. We passed through safely; then, as we were about to put off to sea, a form suddenly rose out of the darkness, and leaped upon the bow.

Kiowana raised an oar to beat the intruder down, but I held his arm, for I saw that the panting form was that of Floo-bloo.

In a moment he straightened up, and stood before us.

"I just came to tell you the score," he said; "I thought you'd like to know!"

"*Who won?*" the three of us asked as one.

"The ball fell on the far side," went on Floo-bloo, "and Fhu-bloo-loo won—six to five!"

I reached out, and grasped his hand.

"Floo-bloo," I said, "we owe you our thanks, both for the game and the score."

The next instant he plunged overboard, and began swimming toward the shore.

"Floo-bloo!" I shouted after him, "are you going to be true to us, and not betray our secret?"

"Bet yer life!" came the answer, from out the darkness.

I turned to Lilloonita, and said quietly:

"What do you think? Shall we turn back, and trust old Maori to keep his promise?"

I could see her shudder at the thought.

"I want to go on," she said simply—"on with the one I love best—also with the one I love *next* best!"

"Kiowana," I said, turning to the happy bridegroom-to-be, who was already getting his course by the twinkling stars above, "head her straight for Fantii Isle. Then give the rudder to me, for the crew is waiting for you, Kiowana—upon the fo'ard deck!"

Five-Fathom Bank

A YACHT-RACING STORY

By Mayn Clew Garnett

The cup is the big prize, as yachtsmen see it; but so often is there a greater trophy, in the eye of some romantic, or even unromantic, young skipper or owner, that the story of the race is much the richer for the fact. See how certain wise guests of the *Mermaid*'s owner figured it all out, and how near they came to guessing the truth.

(A COMPLETE NOVELETTE)

CHAPTER I.

AN INVITING RIDDLE.

H'IST away the jib!"

The order snapped out like the crack of a pistol. Two men at the halyard sent it hand over hand to the masthead, and the scraping of the steel hanks upon the steel stay blended with the slatting of the canvas as it shook in the growing breeze.

It was early morning.

"Haul to windward—let go the mooring!" came the quick order from the skipper, standing upon the weather quarter, conning his ship. Then: "Slack away the mainsheet—slack away, slack away lively!"

The seventy-foot steel schooner *Mermaid* swung off the wind, her jib filling out and pulling strongly.

"Forestaysail!" came the order; and as she gathered headway as the wind drew abeam, she leaned over until her copper paint rose well out to windward under the pressure of her whole lower canvas.

Her maintopsail was already set. She needed only her foretopsail and jibtopsail to finish her dressing, and as she went rapidly seaward men in white duck uniforms sprang to their station.

The fore was sheeted home as it went to the masthead, the tack sweated down, and by that time the small jibtopsail was drawing, having been sent up in a flash. The schooner was standing out in fine style for the lightship.

It was all done in a few minutes. Her discipline was excellent, her crew well trained; her captain, a windjammer of the old school, who knew a wood lock from a Flemish horse, and who could put his cloth on a vessel in less time than it takes to tell of it.

The daybreak was beautiful. A strong breeze blew from the eastward, and the sunlight sparkled upon the lower bay of New York.

The owner of the *Mermaid* came on deck as she stretched out for the sea, and he placed a chair near the binnacle. He enjoyed the action, the scene of strife that was beginning. He was entered for the Cape May Cup, and the course was from the Sandy Hook light vessel to the Five-Fathom Bank lightship, down the Jersey coast—a straightaway run down and back—and victory to the first one over the line. The distance between the lightships is about ninety-eight miles—or, roughly, a hundred-mile run.

"Don't you think we can stand the maintopmast staysail?" asked the owner of his skipper.

"Just as soon as we get across the line, sir," said Captain Sams. "I'll put the big one on her as soon as we get started right. It won't do to shift it while we work for position."

"Who's the most dangerous man in jockeying for the start?" asked Mr. Weems.

"Well, there's Charley Carr; he's a devil for getting in and slippin' through

to windward of one. His art is mostly in correct timing, keepin' a know on his speed to a fraction of a fathom. He can run in on your weather quarter within half a second of gun fire——"

"No; I mean who's the most dangerous man for us. We can beat Carr's boat, and give him any position he wants. I'm more afraid of the *Solander* or the *Flying Star*——"

"Yes, sir; I think myself it's between us after we get started—between us and the *Flying Star*. That's her, right ahead there—and she's some ship, let me tell you. Look at her! Look how she goes through it with only her lower canvas on her; and she's laying closer to the wind than a flea to a dog's skin. Old man Jackson always carries a party aboard, mostly women; and that's his daughter standing there now at the wheel. She's a good sailor, as good as any yachtsman I ever saw——"

"Well, that's the boat I'm afraid of, Sams. Don't let him get us, if you can help it. Understand? It's more than this infernal cup I'm after."

Jones, a young man of a sentimental turn, heard this statement. Higgins, another young guest of Weems, had come on deck, and Jones turned to him.

"Evidently something on in this race, hey?" he said.

"Why, what makes you say that?"

"Just heard Weems say to the skipper that there was much more than the cup he was after—something more, you know;" and he grinned.

"Suppose it's Ruth Jackson?" said Higgins. "Heard Weems was mighty hard hit there. Like as not, he's made some kind of foolish bet to win the race and girl together. I've read of lots of those things in books. They might be so. Who knows?"

"That's what it is, all right," declared Jones. "I saw him talking to old man Jackson last Saturday. They were very much in earnest. I like Weems all right—I wouldn't be aboard his ship if I didn't—but I don't think Miss Jackson is his kind, you know. Of course, you never can tell."

Mr. Jenks, mate of the *Mermaid*, was waiting to speak to Sams, and, as he stood near, he heard the conversation. He had been much interested in that race. Now he was more so, for there was something piquant in it—something besides that silver cup, which could be bought for a few hundred dollars.

Jenks stood gazing at the *Flying Star*, with that beautiful girl holding the wheel gracefully; and the vessel tore along to windward in the bright early morning. That was a prize worth racing for. He was glad of it, understood it, and glad that this was not a mere trial of speed for exploiting builders or designers. So it was a race for a woman! Well, surely he would do his part. When he had a chance he spoke to the skipper.

"The boss told you there was something on, hey?"

"Yes, but he didn't say what it was," returned the cautious old windjammer.

"I just heard some of the men saying—old man Jackson's daughter, the one steering the *Flying Star*—if Mr. Weems beat his boat, he gets the girl—that's about the lay of it, they say. What do you think?"

Sams smiled. He had always heard that story, always heard that there was something more than the usual prize for the victor.

CHAPTER II.

SUSPICION CONFIRMED.

Captain Sams had raced few yachts, but he had heard much of the game, and had read dozens of stories about them. He was a good skipper, for he had been some years in coasters, where his work in handling fore-and-aft canvas had taught him enough to be valuable to yachtsmen. He knew how to get the most out of anything that used cloth for motive power.

The owner of the *Mermaid*, Charles Weems, was a young bachelor. He was a clubman, a social favorite, and the possessor of enough money and property to be called rich, even in New York. He had four of his friends aboard with him—Jones, the sentimental chap, who wrote poetry for magazines; Higgins, head of a large coffee house; Black, a

well-known banker, and youngest member of the Stock Exchange; and Franklin, son of a rich parent, and possessor of an extensive thirst. The latter did not know much about yachts from a technical viewpoint, but had an amazing discernment regarding them. Once Weems put to him the conundrum, "What is a yacht?" Franklin defined it at once: "A floating bar." And Mr. Weems accepted the definition merrily.

Some of the famous skippers were in that race, and their vessels were now at the lightship, awaiting the starting gun. They stood to and fro across to the northward, with sheets hauled flat, and headway slackened, running down the wind with it dead aft, and mainsheets chock in, the leach of the canvas just full enough to keep from gybing; then swinging close upon the breeze, and standing out again.

The breeze being southeast, it would be a close reach down the beach for those who could lay the course, and a long and short leg for those who could not weather the shoals. From the Five-Fathom Bank back, they would race with the wind on their starboard quarter, and they would go their best and fastest under this position.

The loud crack of the get-ready gun sounded over the sea. Sams went to the wheel to make the start. Jones came close to him.

"Do you think you'll win?" he asked.

"Hell, yes!" answered Sams, out of patience at the question.

"Well, I suppose so; I suppose so—there's to be a life-and-death struggle, eh?"

"Why?" asked Sams.

"Something more'n the cup," said Jones, in answer to the skipper's question. "Then it's the girl—the girl if he wins—to be sure, it's always that way. I read of many a race where the girl always is the real thing they're after—don't you think so?"

"I don't know," said old Sams, looking gloomy; "I don't know what it is, but we've got to get across, all right, or we'll be back looking for jobs in the Cape Fleet before the week's out—see?"

"Sure, *I see*," said the mate, Mr. Jenks, giving the wheel to the captain. "I've been mate here now about two months, and I see how things is goin'. We'll go through, all right. Shall I get out that new number two maintopmast sta's'l?"

"Git out the big one, yes; she'll carry it, and if she don't she'll have to drag it through."

The big schooners—the *Foam, Dauntless, Surf, Saranac,* and *Tiburon*—went across the imaginary line between the commodore's yacht and the lightship. Under all sail, they stretched away, and the schooners of the second class—the seventy-footers—came jockeying for their start.

Sams sent the *Mermaid* across close to the weather mark, and almost got jammed; but he went through with a fraction of a second to spare, Carr, in the *Solander,* and Lycamore, in the *Sayonara,* closing in upon him as he crossed. The three seventy-footers lay well over to the pressure, and poked their long horns out over a ruffling sea that was growing more broken as the breeze grew.

The *Flying Star,* scorning a weather berth, came through just to leeward, and hung upon the port quarter of the *Mermaid* until the banker, her owner, Jackson, who had taken the wheel, suddenly threw her about on the starboard tack, and stood out to sea across the wake of the other three.

He was going to chance the outside route, and trust to the southerly shift that certainly looked to be coming before the race was well on. Then, with a good offing, he would send his crack flyer down the beach on a close reach, and shove her through for all that was in her. The *Flying Star* was famed for hanging on a wind, and would outfoot the others to a certainty, if she could hold her course. The rest would lose time in splitting tacks under the shore.

With her whole canvas upon her, the *Mermaid* was a beautiful sight as she raced away, the *Solander* and *Sayonara* close under her lee, the three going through it like mad, and laying down until their decks were washed in a

storm of foam suds that roared and rushed past.

Weems took the wheel, and Higgins stood close to him.

"My, she's a flyer, all right! How we do go!" exclaimed the guest.

"She'll travel all right," said Weems, meeting the heave to windward with a turn of the wheel. "She's as gentle and true—as a woman," he went on; and a gleam of understanding came to Higgins' eyes. "How she minds her helm when the sea swings her up! Why, you could steer her yourself——"

"I might, but I'd rather not," put in Higgins. "I might get you into trouble just now. When we come back you can let me have a chance. I'd love to guide her——"

"You steer a ship—you don't guide her," remarked Weems, smiling.

"Well, it means the same thing, doesn't it?"

A puff of more than usual violence pressed upon the fabric. A droning hum sang through the rigging. The *Mermaid* laid her decks awash, and fairly tore through the sea, sending a perfect storm of water over her bows, and shooting the spray so high that it came aft in a heavy shower.

"Better get into the oilers," said Weems, holding the wheel and gazing anxiously to windward.

CHAPTER III.

THE GIRL AT THE WHEEL.

The *Flying Star* had disappeared in the mist off the port quarter, and the blue-steel color of the sky to the southward told of a hard, strong blow coming up the coast. If it came far enough to the eastward to let Weems clear the shoals abreast of Barnegat, he would be able, in all probability, to fetch clear down to the Five-Fathom Bank lightship. If it was well to the southward, the *Flying Star,* lying well offshore, would have the weather of her, and probably the race.

Old man Jackson, the hilarious banker, who owned and sailed the *Flying Star,* knew the coast to a hair. His guests were already in oilers, sitting about like yellow lay figures upon the slanting decks, and enjoying the lively scene.

"Better let the skipper take the wheel now," said her father to Miss Jackson, as the captain, or sailing master, approached, looking anxiously at the weather.

Captain Williams was a good yacht captain, and he saw that there was going to be some heavy weather before the vessels got back to New York. He did not want a young woman to carry away anything in the beginning of this race. The girl wished to relieve her father, who had taken the helm from her. She felt capable of steering the yacht on a stretch.

"But I can hold her all right," said Miss Jackson.

"No," replied Jackson pleasantly but firmly. "There's too much at stake. It isn't all the Cape May Cup. I want to win this, if I can."

The girl allowed Williams to take the spokes from her, which he did without thinking to read in her face any meaning for her father's words. The captain held the ship a while, and then called his mate.

"Hold her up all you can," he said. "The old man has something more than the cup to race for this time. I'll get my oilskins, and be back in a minute."

It gave the mate something to think about—to realize that this was a race. By the time Williams came back in his long black coat and rubber boots, the idea had taken possession of him.

"Yes," he said, "we must get this through right. Watch the canvas sharply, for it's going to blow, if I know anything."

"How far out are we?" Jackson asked.

"Fifteen miles east of the lightship, I should say," Williams answered.

"Well, then, let her come about—we'll go past all right," said the owner.

A squall pressed her down heavily, and the dull humming of the gale told of what was coming. Williams threw her about, and the *Flying Star,* close-hauled, and going like mad, tore her way down the Jersey shore through a growing sea

that was gray to windward, and began to break and roll with the pressure of the easterly blow behind it.

The first sight of the *Flying Star* Weems managed to get, hours later, off Barnegat. He saw the dim loom of the schooner's canvas showing through the mist and drift off his port quarter. He knew her at once, and she was coming like a wild thing. Far to windward was the mainsail of the big *Dauntless,* and farther ahead showed the *Foam* and *Saranac,* the big fellows going fast under their ordinary working canvas, their lighter stuff having been taken in.

"She's coming, all right," cried Captain Sams. "We'll have trouble with him before ten minutes."

The first thing that happened to cast a doubt upon the mind of Weems as to the advisability of carrying on was the crack of a parting backstay. The maintopmast staysail, too large for the breeze now blowing, had put a heavier strain upon the maintopmast backstay, and it parted close to the buckle on deck, taking the preventer along with it.

The long steel line sang with a vicious "ping!" as it shot aloft like a stretched rubber band, and instantly the topmast bent, buckled at the masthead, then snapped with a dull crack, and down to leeward it went, carrying the staysail and topsail along with it, the mass of wreckage threshing and slatting wildly.

Sams was howling out orders before the tearing canvas, ripping and thundering to leeward, had fairly started on its work of destruction. The mate, with the whole crew of ten men, went for the wreck with a will.

The passengers, with Higgins first, staggered and crawled for the steps of the companionway. Mr. Jones was pale and frightened. Mr. Black, lying to leeward, was unable to crawl across the slanting deck in time to get out of the way of the men, and right lustily clung to a line he saw others hanging on to.

Weems held the wheel steady, with nervous fingers and a frightened look upon his face; but he was too good a yachtsman to lose his nerve at an accident like carrying away a topmast.

Higgins got to his side, and commented upon the ability of the crew, who rushed to the work of saving the gear. One man went aloft in the main, and cut away the tangle. Another went up the fore rigging, and risked his life a dozen times, clearing that staysail.

And all the time the *Flying Star* was creeping up on the weather quarter, under all sail, her bows plowing mightily through the lift of the seas, and her lee deck a foot beneath the foam. They could see the people upon her deck as it slanted greatly toward them, and gradually they could make out old man Jackson at the wheel, with his daughter near him, holding on to the taffrail. A wash of white foam swept along her decks to leeward, and over her weather rail a steady storm of flying sea water flung itself high in the air, and then drove slanting across her, wetting everything and every one.

The *Flying Star's* passengers seemed to be enjoying the lively scene, and Weems was disturbed. As he looked, however, a sudden squall struck the weather boat. Higgins was looking at them as it hit, and he saw the jibtopsail burst at the third cloth. In a moment it was ripping into threads of white, the noise reaching Weems, and making sweet music to his ears.

"Oh, look!" cried Higgins. "They've carried away something—just look!"

But Weems was too busy with the helm.

"Hold her steady, sir!" came Sams' order from forward. The owner watched him, and kept his eye also upon the luff of the mainsail.

Half a mile upon the weather quarter, the *Flying Star* seemed suddenly to become fixed. She was no longer shooting as fast as formerly, and she had not been jammed on the wind as close as the *Mermaid,* for Jackson had been laying a true course for the lightship, with just enough to ease her.

The wind was now swinging slowly to the eastward, and it was no longer a beat to the mark, but a close reach, straightaway.

The Jersey coast sloping off to the southwest from the point they were now

at made the running easier, and, with the hauling wind, would make it a straight race for the light vessel, round her, and then away for Sandy Hook, with the wind on the starboard beam as far up as Barnegat; then, easing off, would bring it upon the starboard quarter, the point that would get the most speed out of all the boats.

The hours of the morning had passed, and the dull gray of the northeaster had hung like a pall upon the waning afternoon. It was growing late.

"I'd take in that foretopsail, if it wasn't for the fact he's running for something important," said Sams to the mate.

"No; we better not risk it. It may mean almost life and death to him, if it's the girl he's after," said the discerning Mr. Jenks.

"I fancy it will take itself in, if we don't," said Sams. "It's going to blow a full gale before night. The glass has dropped three-tenths."

"We're holding the *Star* all safe enough where she is," the mate answered. "She's to windward, but we'd just about clear her if we went about, making us even as far as it goes."

"Well, you keep a close lookout for the lightship; we'll be easing her now, and all we want is just enough room to swing her around," said Sams; and he went aft again to the wheel, which Weems gladly let him take.

The yachts were now going a full twelve knots an hour under the press, and the miles drifted astern rapidly. The mate, watching for the lightship though the haze, saw the big schooner *Dauntless* suddenly change her course and ease her sheets. He knew at once where to look, and saw the black balls of the mastheads showing dimly through the drift.

"Lightship right ahead, sir!" he yelled to Sams.

All interest awoke at once. The mark right ahead, and the *Flying Star* in the weather berth, but astern! Would they do it, would they swing her across the line first?

It was a question no one could answer at once. The schooner of Jackson was doing her best, and held on like a grim hound at the trail of some wounded buck.

CHAPTER IV.

AT THE LIGHTSHIP.

Sams studied out what he could do, and found that he could do nothing more than he had done. He had no maintopmast to spread an extra cloth upon, and he was wondering what he would do when it came to run her off. The spinnaker would go upon the fore, but it was doubtful if she would carry it in the growing gale. It would be dangerous to try to set it.

Jackson saw the lightship about the same time, and set his schooner's head for it. In a few minutes a new baby jibtopsail went up the stay, and broke forth at a pull, setting well, and standing the pressure. Slowly but surely the *Flying Star* crawled up.

"Great Scott! We must do something!" exclaimed Sams to the mate. "We can't let him get away like this."

"It may mean almost life and death to our owner," assented the mate, who came aft as he saw the course laid for the mark.

The two seamen muttered in low tones Weems could not hear, but their looks at his pale and excited face showed him that their interest was intense.

He could ask no more than they had already done, for they had done their best. A parting backstay might happen to any yacht, under such a strain; it was simply testing the strength of steel in such a wind.

Still, Sams thought he might have saved it in time. He felt partly guilty; any good seaman does after an accident. It made him all the more determined to win at any cost. Close-hauled, a preventer does little good, anyhow; it is when running off free that it does the work set for it, for the pull is then more on the beam, and not from forward aft.

The *Flying Star* came gradually closer. Weems could see Jackson now at the wheel, steering his vessel himself.

His daughter still stood near him. Higgins recognized her.

"I wonder how Miss Jackson feels about it?" said he sadly, as the schooner came surely closer.

The mate heard him. It fixed his purpose more grimly. He would not see this young girl's life blighted by the carrying away of a maintopmast. He was sure now that the prize was the object of his owner's heart.

Weems was pale enough, and showed the strain of nerve tension. He gazed out at the plunging craft that crept closer and closer upon his weather quarter, and she was a glorious sight.

Sams stood at the wheel, and held the yacht's bowsprit fair upon the black marks on the Five-Fathom Bank light vessel. The distance was shortening rapidly. The boats were fairly flying through it. Right ahead in the mist a great white ghost showed for a few minutes, as the *Dauntless,* with her sheets well off, went tearing for the Sandy Hook vessel far up the coast. She had turned the mark, and was on her way home. She would get in that night if no accident befell.

The lightship drew close aboard, and as she did so the *Flying Star* drew right on the weather beam, not forty fathoms distant. She had the weather berth fair, and would hold it. There was no chance now of the *Mermaid* going through her lee. A few hundred feet separated the lightship and the racing schooners. Sams held his course.

"Take the wheel a moment, till I get that spinnaker straightened out," he said to the mate; and the mate held the spokes as he went forward. Weems stood at the taffrail with Higgins, and discussed the *Flying Star* in low tones.

"We're getting pretty close to her—don't you think?" asked the owner, as the two schooners drew together abreast, with the *Star* to windward.

"Oh, there's plenty of room, sir," returned the mate, holding his course grimly.

"He'll crowd you out at the turn," said Weems. "The mark boat's gone in already. It's getting bad. You better look out."

Jones watched the owner. He thought he was losing his nerve. Here was a man racing for the fairest prize on earth and commenting with his mate on the dangers of a blow and collision. It showed that his host was not up to the real things of life—unromantic. Now, if he—Jones—were to have a show at winning Ruth Jackson, he'd be willing to swim the rest of the way. Yes, indeed; but women did not always appreciate the beautiful things of life. He found them always more or less mercenary, more or less interested in the practical side of keeping up an establishment. Bah! Weems was his host, but what kind of a man was he to bother with winds or lightships? Win—win at all costs, was Jones' motto. He went to Higgins.

"Say, Weems is losing his sand. He's afraid to carry on—to crowd the *Star.*"

The mate heard it. He smiled, and held the ship true.

"Looks like we'll be forced out, forced astern at the turn, doesn't it?" asked Higgins.

"Well, I wouldn't let them do me that way—not by a blamed sight!" asserted Jones.

"I reckon we'll hold her," observed the mate, and Jones seemed a little better satisfied.

"Sure; hold her to the end," he said, with finality, and went to the companionway.

The pressure was growing. The wind was snoring into a sinister murmur, and the sudden lurches told of the tremendous strain. The *Mermaid* was down to her bearings. She was fairly wallowing through it, forcing herself along half submerged. She would have gone just as fast under shorter canvas, but they held on. Weems stood near the rail, and seemed to feel his responsibility. He was pale and preoccupied.

Mr. Black was very quiet, and stood near the skylight, holding to the coamings. He was wondering at the race, watching Sams as that seaman dragged the spinnaker into position.

The moments were passing, and the yachts tore along toward the light vessel. All were now watching for the re-

sult—the passengers, and even the Jap steward. Mr. Jones stood within the companionway, and held the rails to keep from falling with the lurches the straining ship gave in her frantic effort to hold her place.

The rushing of the surge under the bows of the *Flying Star* sounded strangely loud as the vessels came closer. They were now only a few fathoms apart, and the lightship was but three lengths ahead.

Straight for her bow went Jackson, hauling ahead enough to get right in the path of the *Mermaid*. Then, grazing the lightship as close as he dared, the old yachtsman passed half a length ahead of the rival schooner, and swung suddenly to starboard, gybing sharply, and letting his sheets go well to port, partly killing his headway.

The mate, who still held the wheel, ran the *Mermaid* straight after the winning schooner, and grazed the lightship just as closely as the *Star* had done. Then, without allowing for the sudden swing and the consequent closing in upon his rival, he shot the *Mermaid* over, gybed her, and, before he could throw her head up on the starboard tack, he went crashing straight into the broadside of the *Flying Star*.

CHAPTER V.

JONES AND JENKS WINK.

There was a wild screaming of women, a crash of steel upon steel, a grinding of plates and splintering planks. Then the *Star* pulled out of the mess, and took the foremast of the *Mermaid* with her, dragging down all above the deck save the lower mast, the mainmast, which still held up the big mainsail.

It was a perfect wreck—an awful mess—and the *Star,* with a huge gap in her side, began to settle at once.

Sams saw the fatal stroke almost before it happened. He yelled for his men, and all hands crowded forward to clear away the wreck that now crashed and banged alongside with each heave of the rolling sea.

Weems stood as if stunned by the calamity. He saw at once that there was going to be danger for the passengers and crew of the *Star*. Then, as he watched her settling, he called for his crew to man their boat, and go to the rescue.

"Hadn't we best wait for the men on the lightship?" cried Higgins.

"No; we can't wait a minute," answered Weems wildly. "Get out the small boat. Quick! Get her overboard! Captain, give me three or four of your best men."

The small craft was soon over the side, and Weems dropped into her, almost getting overboard in the struggle; some men were quickly with him. Weems saw the boats from the lightship lowering down as he started off, his own boat riding the sea badly, and almost swamping in the rushes of the combers, which now ran strong with the gale.

Yet he would not wait. He had run down a fellow yachtsman, and it was his duty to go to the rescue. The *Star* sank rapidly, and before he came alongside the sea was breaking over her aft, and her passengers were huddled forward, waiting anxiously to be taken off.

Jackson's own boat soon came away, with all save the old banker himself and his daughter, before Weems dared to lay his craft to leeward and come close enough to make a landing. The sea was running high and strong, and he had great difficulty to keep from being smashed against the wreck.

Miss Jackson held back.

"For Heaven's sake, come along—come quick!" called Weems to her. "Come, Jackson—I can't lay here long."

"A pretty mess you've made of my schooner," barked the banker. "I didn't know I was racing a ram—I thought you were a yachtsman."

The *Star* settled down until her stern was low enough for the sea to break clean across it. Her bow rose slightly.

Miss Jackson, tall and beautiful, stood close to her father; but her face showed the anxiety she felt for the sinking vessel. It was dangerous to remain aboard longer. The lightship crew would be a few minutes yet before they

got alongside. They had not cleared the ship, quite, and it was several hundred fathoms now to row through a heavy sea. The *Star* might drop from under them any minute, and, being steel, she would go fast.

Weems was not a bad seaman, for an amateur. He was determined. He watched a chance, and sprang aboard the wreck as she settled low in the sea.

"Come along with me," he said to Jackson. "You know it was an accident—not my fault, old man. Let me take Miss Jackson, anyhow. Come!"

"Well, I suppose I might as well go. After all, there's no use getting mad at trouble like this. But what the devil ailed you? Why did you run me down?" asked Jackson, relaxing his anger a little, and coming to the rail.

"Stand by to take this lady," called Weems to his men, and he swung the girl down into the boat as that craft rose high and lifted her thwarts close to the settling rail of the schooner. Then, as she dropped away and below with the sinking of the sea, he turned to the banker.

"You first," he said, bowing gravely.

"Oh, no—after you, old man," insisted the old fellow gallantly.

Weems helped him to drop at the right moment, and he landed safe in the bottom of the small boat. The younger man followed at once, and the men shoved clear of the sinking ship. The boat from the lightship swung under her stern at that moment, and the officer in her hailed:

"Any more aboard, sir?"

"No, that's about all; but I'll get you to help transfer the passengers to the lightship as soon as we get aboard the yacht," yelled Weems.

The lightship officer nodded assent, and followed the yacht's boat to the *Mermaid*.

"I've anchored her, sir, and she'll ride it out safe enough with seventy fathoms of good iron ahead of her," said Sams, as Weems came back aboard his own boat.

"Everybody from the *Star* get safely aboard?" asked Weems.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, get the whole party aboard the lightship before the sea gets too heavy. It will blow great guns before night."

"I'm awfully sorry, sir——"

"Stop! Not a word, captain. It was not your fault; we'll not discuss the matter now," said Weems. "Get the women quickly into the lightship's boats, as they are much heavier than ours, and can stand it better. Make two trips of it. The officer, there, will stand by——"

The boats of the lightship—there were now two of them lying astern—were waiting for the women who had been brought from the *Star* to get ready to go aboard. Some were unable to move from fright. In fact, all were more or less upset, and, there being now a dozen of them—men and women—it was impossible to keep them longer upon the *Mermaid*. The yacht was safe enough for the present, for Sams had let go her anchor, and she was riding with her mainsail still set, the canvas holding her head to the sea.

She was in less than six fathoms of water, and the shore was plainly seen looming through the haze of the easterly storm. But the holding was good. She might lay there until a tug could be sent for her.

Her unexpected guests, however, as well as those who started with her on the race, were unprovided for, and as her racing rig did not include much in the way of stores outside of bottled stuff, the crowd aboard of her were in a fair way to starve if the gale held out several days. There was no alternative but to get them all aboard the lightship.

Weems did his best. He was all over the schooner, trying to calm and encourage everybody. Some of the men railed at him for a lubber. They vowed he was the worst yachtsman they ever had heard of; that he was responsible for the disaster to the *Star*. And all of this, while true, to a certain extent, did not keep the poor man from doing his utmost to make the growling crowd as safe and comfortable as he could.

Jones and Jenks noted, with knowing winks, that Miss Jackson had no word of complaint against Weems.

"You simply must go aboard the lightship," he urged Mrs. Simpson, of the Jackson party.

"But I cannot! I cannot get into such a tiny boat," moaned the lady. "It will kill me; it nearly did so the last time, coming from the *Star*."

By moral persuasion, and almost using force, he finally got her and the others to make the effort. It was dangerous enough in that sea, for the wind was now blowing a gale.

A whip was sent out from the lightship, and the boats were drawn up close to her quarter, when the passengers were finally passed aboard, after great difficulty. It was black dark before the last of the men were passed over the side, and the captain of the *Mermaid* was sent back to his ship.

"I'll come over in the morning, and help you," called Weems to Sams, as the skipper went back, after helping the last person aboard.

CHAPTER VI.

THE "SOMETHING BESIDES."

By eight bells that night, it was snoring, blowing a cyclone from the east, with a shifting, furious outfly of squalls working to the northward.

The lightship plunged, raised herself, and dived, switched, and bucked; but she rode safely and dry at the end of her bowers cables. The motion was awful, terrible, for she wore no cloth to steady her, and she was light.

The dull, snoring roar of the hurricane prevented sleep for the tired and exhausted guests of Mr. Jackson and Weems, and they spent the night bemoaning their fate, and blessing the day they had taken to yachting.

The two owners did what they could, but it was no use. The captain of the lightship gave them the regular food of his crew, and they finally managed to eat a little breakfast, holding to the table, and jamming their coffee cups in the cleats; but most of them gave it up after a smashing of crockery and ruinous scatter of food upon the deck.

The men of the vessel gallantly gave their bunks to the ladies, and sought refuge in the galley and under the lee of the bulwarks. But the ladies were not very appreciative, and seemed to feel that it was their natural right.

Two days it blew furiously; the third it began to slack up. Weems, who had been watching his yacht riding it out at her anchor, began to feel that the crisis was past. He would save his pretty schooner, after all. He felt better. He began to talk more hopefully. Only Jones, who seemed in a sort of trance, did not respond to the general rise of spirits.

"I suppose this race will be declared off, anyhow?" he finally asked Weems.

"I don't know about that. It will have to be settled by the racing committee. Jackson might have won; then, he might not have won. He certainly didn't get a show, as we ran him down before the finish. But he had no right to cross my bows so close that I couldn't get past the lightship. No; it's a question between us whether he will enter a protest."

Jones sought Miss Jackson. The girl was not responsive. She was silent as to the race. Mr. Black semed to interest her more than yacht racing. Mr. Black was going to have a yacht built, of immense size—so he told her—and Miss Jackson was invited to christen it.

Just as the gale let up, and began to show signs of swinging off, Sams, from the *Mermaid,* set a signal. It read:

"Adrift—cable parted."

And so Mr. Weems and his friend, Jackson, came on deck, and stood there, watching the white steel beauty go slowly in upon the treacherous sand of Jersey—go slowly to her fate. The sea was enormous, and she would be useless as a racer after striking, even though she might be dragged off afterward.

Sams and his men did all they could. They worked like giants to save her. Had the foremast stood, the gallant old seaman would have put his canvas on, and driven her to sea, or the bottom. But he could do nothing with just that lower mainmast sticking from her decks. He set the distress signal, and the life-saving crews, who had been

watching, got out their boat, and ran it down to the beach, along with the line gun.

The *Mermaid* finally went in and struck. The seas tore over her as they do over a half-tide rock in a choppy channel. She pounded slowly in until she struck less than a fathom of water. Then she stopped.

The life-saving crews shot her with the line gun, and the stump of the mainmast was used for the whip and hawser to run the breeches buoy upon, for, in spite of the shoal water, it was a dangerous undertaking to get the men ashore. She lay far out. The crew finally went in, and all hands upon the lightship cheered as the last man, Captain Sams, took his place in the breeches. The guests of Jackson and Weems crowded the rails to watch, and they could see very well.

Jackson grew suddenly very jolly, almost garrulous, at the sight. It did not depress him at all. The *Mermaid* seemed to him to be paying her just debt for sinking his own craft—paying with her life for the accident.

Weems was pale and quiet, and Jones watched him. He almost felt sorry for his host, after all. But there could be no race now. It was impossible to call it a race where both ships were lost.

Jones looked at Miss Jackson. It seemed to him the girl was relieved. She even smiled often when Mr. Black spoke to her. Perhaps she did not love Weems. Weems was very rich. Perhaps it was just as well. Providence worked in strange ways.

"I suppose we'll call that bet off now?" remarked Jackson, coming to the side of Weems, as he stood watching the end of his yacht.

"What bet?" asked Weems.

"Why, that side bet of a box of Havanas—the bet for the winner. Don't you remember?"

"Oh, yes! I'd clean forgotten," answered Weems, without interest.

"So had I; but I remember it now, all right," said Jackson.

Jones, who stood near, gasped. He stepped closer.

"Was—was that—all you were racing for—racing for—besides the cup?" he asked, in a husky voice.

"Why, yes; but what makes you ask it that way?" said Weems, turning to him.

"Nothing—but the captain of your yacht—the *Mermaid*—I mean, your mate—well, he seemed to think it was of great importance that you should win this race—he seemed to believe it was something almost of life and death."

"Indeed?" was all that Weems replied.

"Funny—what made you talk that way?" asked Jackson.

"Oh, the devil! I believe I did say something about a bet besides the cup, now that I think of it. But what about it? Yes, it was a box of cigars—that's all. What the dickens is the matter?"

"Nothing at all," answered Jones, utterly disgusted.

The captain of the lightship approached. He seemed to feel the sadness of the disaster keenly, and spoke softly.

"That smoke to the northward is the cutter *Gresham* coming to take you all ashore—back to town," he ventured. Then he looked at Miss Jackson and at Weems. "I hope everything will be all right in the end," he said meaningly; but neither Weems nor Jackson appeared to notice.

Jones left them, stole softly away, and down the companion.

Awarding the Prize

DINER—"Waiter, how's this? I have just discovered a collar button in my soup."

Waiter—"Yes, sir, you're the lucky man. We have prize soup on Mondays and Wednesdays. A handsome gift in every twentieth plate. You've won the prize to-day."

The Sailor Bird's Secret

By A. N. Jackson

What a parrot said has furnished many an amusing yarn, but in this stirring tale it is what the parrot wouldn't say that keeps two Canadian chaps, a band of mutineers and a horde of savages on the steady jump through a series of stirring scenes.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS

Condensed so that those who have not read them may do so now and go on with the rest of the story

Two Canadians, Frederick Newton and John Parker, become tired of their monotonous life of hard work in the small town of Peterboro, and start out on a career of adventure. At Quebec they secrete themselves in the hold of an outgoing bark without learning anything of its destination.

While in hiding they overhear the plot of four white sailors and a negro to mutiny, seize the ship, and sail down the coast of Africa to search for a certain buried treasure. A gray parrot which is on the ship has the clew to the location of the treasure in certain words taught it by the man that buried the treasure, and the sailors try to make the bird speak the words, but it remains silent.

The mutiny breaks out just off the coast of Africa, and is successful, but the ship takes fire and the mutineers are forced to leave in the boats without the precious parrot. Newton and Parker, however, rescue the bird and make for the shore on a rude raft. A huge wave sweeps Newton from the raft and renders him unconscious, but he regains his senses presently and finds himself in calm and shallow water.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON A STRANGE SHORE.

NEWTON'S first thought was for Parker. He looked seaward. Parker was riding to shore, half on and half off the raft, and the parrot was squawking loudly enough to show it was alive.

"Riding" possibly describes Parker's progress too smoothly, for he was being buffeted by the waves, but not so much as Newton had been.

The raft was thrown on shore with sufficient violence to bury one of its ends in the sand, and Parker jumped off with a loud:

"Hello!"

"Here I am, Jack!" Newton shouted, as he ran to where his friend was.

"Why did you let go, you idiot?" Parker exclaimed, but, though his words were rough, they did not entirely disguise the relief he felt at seeing Newton had survived.

"Why didn't *you* stick on better?" Newton retorted. "You looked like an eccentric flying fish as you came ashore."

"We're both here, anyhow, thank Heaven!" Parker exclaimed fervently.

"But what has become of the ship?" asked Newton anxiously.

He and Parker gazed toward the seething surf. Only a few feet of the still-glowing mainmast was to be seen.

"She has sunk, and that's the last of her!" Parker exclaimed, as the glow on the mast faded out suddenly and disappeared.

The castaways now turned their attention to their own personal affairs, and inspected the guns, ammunition, and food they had brought with them. These had been wrapped in oilskin coverings and securely lashed to the raft, and were uninjured.

"There's some sand higher up as dry as a bone," said Newton. "Let's carry the things up there."

"And I vote we camp there to-night," suggested Parker. "It doesn't look inviting farther inland; almost anything may be lurking in that scrub."

"Right-o!" agreed Newton.

After they had moved to the higher part of the beach, they broke into their little store of provisions. And having

fed the parrot as well as themselves—though Polly seemed too disgusted with recent events to care for what was given her—they lay down in the warm sand, which quickly dried their soaked clothing, and talked.

Each had a loaded gun within reach, and they meant to keep awake the whole night, that they might not be surprised by any man or beast that might be prowling about.

"Where are we, do you think, Jack?" asked Newton.

"Somewhere on the west coast of Africa," answered his companion. "That's where the gang wished to land, you know."

"And you do not know exactly where this Glancanda is?" Newton queried.

"No; somewhere near the French Congo, I think."

"And near here?"

"Perhaps, as distances go in this country."

"But I wonder where those fellows did land, after all," Newton said musingly.

"They may have been blown anywhere in that storm," Parker answered, "or all drowned."

"If we were to meet them again, it might be awkward for us," remarked Newton.

Parker grunted.

"Be thankful you're here and that the storm's passing over," he said, "and chance the rest."

"Now, if those chaps aren't dead, and we meet them again on the highroad to Glancanda, what shall we do?" asked Newton presently.

"Cut them!" Parker said humorously, closing his eyes and opening them again quickly—he was beginning to feel rather sleepy. "But there are no highroads here, at least I don't think there are," he added.

"How about that first ship home, Jack?" Newton asked slyly.

Parker roused himself.

"We must get to a trading station and go back from there," he said. "There are plenty of rivers here, I believe, and, if we go on long enough, we are sure to come to one; then we'll go along its banks, and sooner or later we'll reach a station. It'll be all right. Don't bother yourself!"

"And give up the treasure?" Newton exclaimed anxiously.

"Wait until you've had a day or two in the bush, or whatever they call it here; you won't be so keen on the treasure then, I fancy," replied Parker.

"Are there many cannibals knocking about here, do you think, Jack?" Newton asked next. He knew that at home Parker was always yarning with sailors who were well acquainted with many foreign countries, and he believed he should be something of an authority on the special part of Africa they were now so strangely visiting.

"Oh, quit, and let me have a short nap; you can wake me in ten minutes, and then have one yourself, if you like," Parker grumbled, closing his eyes in earnest.

And Fred became silent, and as he was quite unaccustomed to keeping a night watch, and was tired out, he was sound asleep in ten minutes, in spite of himself.

CHAPTER XIV.

A PECULIAR GUIDE.

The castaways were astonished when they awoke the next morning to find they had slept so soundly in their strange surroundings. But as no mishap had occurred during the night, they were glad they had both made so good a use of it.

Feeling refreshed and invigorated, they started cheerfully on the march inland, each carrying some of the food, guns, and ammunition, and Newton carrying the parrot, which had maintained a stolid silence since the shipwreck.

Halting only for meals and sleep, they walked through comparatively open country for three days; then the character of the land changed, and some high hills rose in front of them.

Reaching the crest of one of these hills, Parker, who was in advance, halted and leaned forward, as if looking down upon something of great interest.

"What is it?" Newton called out.

Parker raised his arm, and pointed to something in the distance. Newton gave three mighty bounds, which brought him beside his friend.

"There's our river!" Parker exclaimed.

Below them was a silver streak, which divided and wound in and out between dark-green mangoes.

Descending the hill, the explorers trudged on in the direction of the river; Parker from time to time consulting the compass he had brought away with him from the ship.

Soon rank vegetation, which shut out most of the daylight, appeared beneath and around them. Several times they saw the lithe, wriggling bodies of snakes crawl out of their way, and once they fancied some large, four-footed animal stole past them.

They held their guns ready in their hands, but, as they continually tripped over the roots of the undergrowth, they were often within an ace of shooting themselves or each other. Plodding on for another day, they came upon the river, which was farther off than it had appeared.

They were jaded and footsore, and had eaten nearly all their provisions.

Close to the bank of the river, they discovered an empty canoe. Parker gave a dry-throated yell of satisfaction.

"Whoever it belongs to," he said, "I'm going to ask him to give us a lift. There's sure to be a village or something higher up, and we'll just wait until the owner of this dugout comes; and, if he doesn't come, we'll borrow it and paddle ourselves up, and he can fetch it back when he wants it."

Parker turned away from the river, and found a startling surprise awaiting him. A very black and vigorous-looking negro was pointing a long-barreled gun straight at his head.

The owner of the canoe had returned sooner than they expected.

"You no touch my canoe!" the negro said threateningly.

"We're a bit tired of walking, and we thought you might give us a lift," Parker said, astonished at the negro's command of the English language.

"What's a lift? I don't know," said the negro, lowering his gun.

"We want to get to a village or station, and, if you're going to one, perhaps you will not mind our going with you," Parker explained.

"Where you come from?" the negro asked.

"Over that way," Parker answered vaguely, with a flourish of his arm.

The negro frowned. Then he noticed the parrot and its cage, and his wide lips parted in an amiable smile.

"Where you get bird?" he inquired.

"We found him hopping about," Parker answered diplomatically, and well within the truth.

"You come with me. I take you to village; you see chief," said the negro. "He speak English same as me; good missionary man teach us. You come along."

The two wayfarers got into the canoe with the negro, and he paddled them swiftly up the river.

Their new friend was a queer-looking object, Newton thought, and his raiment looked even more comical as he paddled.

An ancient frock coat hung upon his shoulders in folds. Under this coat was a flannel shirt, which, near the waist, floated freely outside a pair of flannel trousers that were cut so short as to display his black calves, and he wore above his black face a dented and disreputable silk hat.

Newton wondered if he were a cannibal, and if he were now wearing garments for which the "good missionary man" had no further use.

As they reached the landing stage—a narrow strip of sand with rocks on one side of it, and on the other a dark tunnel cut through the bush and leading to the village—the friends gazed wonderingly at a name that was painted in red letters a foot long upon one of the bigger rocks:

SILAS EPHRAIM CAMBERTON,
UNIVERSAL PROVIDER,
PATRONIZED BY THE CHIEF OF THIS VILLAGE.

There was another inscription below

this, which they could not read, but they concluded, from a certain similarity, that it repeated in another language what they had already read.

"That one great American," the negro said, seeing the visitors' eyes riveted upon the red letters. "Great friend of chief, but not here now. Come along!"

And the negro took them through the tunnel, but before they arrived at the end of it he paused, and, holding out his hand to Newton, said:

"Give me parrot; chief not like you have that. I take and hide bird. Give him back afterward."

Newton drew back, and looked at Parker inquiringly.

But before Parker could reply to that look, the negro took the cage out of Newton's hand, and, saying: "You wait here, I back soon," he plunged into the thick bushes, and disappeared.

"Hi, stop, or I'll shoot!" Newton cried. And he raised his gun, but Parker struck it up.

"Don't be a fool, Fred," he said; "a shot may bring a hornet's nest of savages down upon us, and they'd kill us as soon as look at us."

"But he's stolen our parrot," Newton said, "and left us here."

"He said we'd get it again," contended Parker, "and that he would soon come back."

"But will he?" Newton said doubtfully.

CHAPTER XV.

SAVAGE ROYALTY.

It was some time before the negro returned, but he did return at last.

"I put bird nice place; nobody find him. Give him you after you see chief," he remarked coolly, when he rejoined the anxious men.

Newton scowled at him, but he did not seem to notice it.

"Why would your chief not like us to have it?" Newton asked, as they continued to walk rapidly through the tunnel.

"He not like that kind of bird," the negro remarked easily. "He funny."

"What is the name of the village we are going to?" Parker asked, changing the conversation.

"Nuwak," the negro answered; "fine place."

It was not Glancanda, then. And unless the steward and bo's'n's gang were astray also, or had to pass through Nuwak to reach Glancanda, they were not likely to be there.

A suspicion crossed Parker's mind that perhaps the negro had learned something about their valuable parrot, but he now dismissed it as very unlikely.

For some time they had heard the sound of a tom-tom, and presently the tunnel ended, and they were in the village.

The friends had fallen in with a very prosperous tribe, and the village was a large one. Its bamboo houses were well built. Outside, on the sandy soil, some of the blacks were dancing round a man who was thumping the tom-tom, but as the travelers and their guide drew near, they crowded round the two white men, and chattered like magpies.

Both men and women were clad in quaintly draped and gorgeously colored cloths, and a few of the men had flannel shirts, worn after the fashion of the guide. But he could boast of a silk hat and frock coat, from which it may be seen he was a person of some importance.

He now spoke rapidly and commandingly, and, waving the crowd back, took his patrons to one of the bamboo houses, and invited them to step inside.

They did this very willingly, and Newton's eyes opened wide as he looked at the room they had entered. It was well furnished, and there were other rooms beyond it.

All Newton's ideas of what was customary in West Africa were being completely upset. He had had visions of naked savages and stuffy huts with a hole in them for a door, and here were more or less artistic costumes, and, for that part of the world, luxuriously furnished houses with quite respectable doors and windows.

A table covered with a richly decorated cloth was in one part of the room,

and on it—of all things in the world—was a gramophone!

Their guide pointed to the gramophone, and with a mixture of pride and awe said:

"That the present great American give chief. Big spirit inside. It only speak when great American here." And then recovering his serenity, he added in a businesslike manner: "Now, I go find chief and tell him you here. If he in good temper, he come."

"I say, Jack, look!" Newton gasped, pointing with an outstretched finger at the gramophone, after the negro had vanished.

"It's big enough to be heard all over the village," Parker returned.

"Yes, but fancy finding it and all these things here!"

"Oh, there's a lot of superstition in the tribes," said Parker, with his secondhand knowledge gathered from the sailors he had chatted with at home, "and the duffers believe this is some sort of a magic thing."

Newton chuckled. "I'd like to set it going," he said.

Parker smiled mischievously.

"Ever been introduced to royalty before?" Newton inquired presently.

"Never."

"I suppose black royalty is much the same as white," said Newton, "only you don't kiss hands and trip out of the room backward."

"I don't think any of that will be necessary," Parker answered, chuckling. "These savages are usually a go-as-you-please lot, I fancy."

"We must be careful of the chief's temper, though," Fred continued; "you heard what that chap said—he's evidently got a nasty one."

"We'll try and keep on the right side of him," said Parker.

"Our old gang isn't about here, as far as I can see," Newton remarked.

"No, and it's not the place they wanted to get to," Parker said; "so let's hope we shan't meet them."

The negro guide returned at that moment, and said:

"Chief see you—good, eh?"

The visitors smiled.

"He come!" the negro continued, lifting his hand warningly. And a fat old black shuffled into the room.

He was clothed in flannel like their guide, but, instead of a silk hat and frock coat, he wore a French soldier's discarded tunic and a military cap, and he had his feet thrust into a pair of bedroom slippers which were a size too large for him.

Newton took a good look at him.

"You English?" the chief inquired, returning Newton's gaze with interest.

"Well—Canadian," Newton answered.

"Ever been here before?"

"Never."

"Where you come from?" asked the chief.

"The coast," said Newton.

"What you do there? You no trade?"

Newton glanced at his friend. This was an awkward question to answer.

"We lost our way in the bush," Parker said.

"How you come from that place—what you call—Canada?"

"On a ship," Parker felt obliged to answer.

"What happen to ship?"

"She was wrecked," Parker said. It had to come out at last.

"Where the others?"

"I don't know," Parker admitted; "they left the ship before we did."

"You like stay here?" inquired the chief, with interest.

"We want to get back to Canada as soon as possible," Parker said.

"You wait here; great American come three, four day; he take you down river," said the chief, looking at the other negro, who motioned to the visitors to follow him out of the room—and the interview was ended.

Taking them to one of the smaller houses in the village, the negro told them it was unoccupied, and that they could stay there, and he would see they were well fed and cared for; and, as he was about to leave them to their own devices, Newton inquired after the parrot.

"Give him you when you go," the negro said, walking off.

Parker looked after him with an expression of disgust.

"I wonder if he knows what a valuable bird that is?" he said to Jack.

"The same idea occurred to me, but how could he have heard anything about it?" Jack said. "Of course the gang know we were on board, and that we must have heard all they said, because the Irishman saw us. But I don't suppose they know what became of us and the parrot—afterward."

"Oh, I don't know," Fred replied; "I don't trust either of those black beauties—they've each got a pair of shifty eyes."

"I had to tell the chief about the shipwreck," Jack said, "and I only hope they won't get talking about it, or the gang may hear of it, if they're in the neighborhood."

"Well, we'll be on our guard," Fred said, "and that American chap will come along soon—in three or four days, the chief said."

"In 'three, four day,' he said, which is quite a different thing, and may mean anything, I fancy," Jack said.

"Bother them!" ejaculated Fred. "Why can't they talk proper English—one can never be quite sure what they're driving at."

"I wonder what the American is like, and if he's a decent sort; they seem to think a lot of him here," Jack said. "It may be some time before he comes, though, and, if he doesn't come soon, we may have to go without him."

"And while we are waiting, we'll hunt round and see if we can't find the parrot," Fred said.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

Parker would have preferred to avoid anything that might detain them in the negro village and prevent their reaching a more civilized part of Africa, but Newton's interest in the parrot and the treasure had not been lessened by their adventures, and his friend consented to wander in any direction that might lead to the place where the valuable bird was concealed.

After several attempts to leave the village unnoticed, they managed, on the third day of their arrival there, to escape down the tunnel which led from the village to the river, without—so far as they knew—being shadowed.

"Now, get out your compass, Jack," Newton said, "and see that we don't lose ourselves; and we'll dive into the thicket on the side the negro went. I don't suppose he would leave the bird anywhere but under cover, and I dare say it's still where he left it, so we ought to be able to find it."

"Right you are!" said Parker. "We've got to while away the time somehow."

But after they had dived into the thicket, they must have missed the path the negro had taken, for they had difficulty in proceeding farther.

Branches, thickly strung with climbing plants, barred the way, and sharp thorns tore their clothing and pricked their flesh.

"This can't be the way he came," Newton said; "he would have taken longer to get through all this. Where's your knife, Jack?"

Parker took out his knife, and slashed away at one side of the thicket, which seemed less dense than the rest.

As he hacked at it, it parted, and showed a serpentine path curving on the other side of it.

"That must be the path he took!" exclaimed Newton, "but won't he see we've been cutting through the hedge?"

"Things grow quickly here," Jack replied. "Anyway, it's done now, and can't be helped."

Getting on the path, the adventurers followed it until they came in sight of a low bark hut.

They looked at it thoughtfully.

"There may be savages inside, or the parrot, or both," suggested Newton. "Shall we chance it?"

"It looks a broken-down affair," Parker answered dubiously.

"Quiet!" whispered Newton, dragging the other back. "Who's that?"

A negro was walking along the far-

ther end of the path, which wound round the hut and away into the jungle beyond it.

"By Jove! It's the ship's negro—Sambo!" Parker exclaimed softly.

And the two watched Sambo go up to the hut and peep into it. Apparently satisfied with what he saw there, he went in.

The watchers hid behind the thicket, and waited. And after a little while, another man came in sight—their frock-coated guide.

He went into the hut also, and closed the door opening with a wide piece of bark.

"We must look and see what they are doing," Parker whispered.

And they crept up to the hut. The piece of bark which covered the door did not fit very tightly, and they looked through a crack, but they found that, unless they showed more of themselves than they cared to, they could see nothing.

The two men were talking in low tones, and the boys could understand part of what they said, for they were talking "trade English," as Africans often do when they meet a member of another tribe whose language differs from their own.

Trade English, however, is not easily understood by any one unaccustomed to hearing it spoken, so the listeners had to guess the meaning of much that was said, which amounted practically to this:

"I got them—they in the village!" their guide said. "And their parrot is here. They by um river, and with bird and cage, I no trouble to know them after what you told me. It same bird."

"That same bird," agreed Sambo. "And when people across the river eat the others, we have all the jewels and the gold—you and I."

"And the great American give lots of things for that?" questioned his companion.

"He and other traders give all you ask," Sambo said. "I heard others talk, there's enough for both of us—and more. You know me before I went to sea. I always tell the truth. You my friend."

"Yes, I know, we friends," the other replied. "And the bird get it out of rocks and sand for us?"

"Others say so; they think I not listen, but I hear. Bird great charm," said Sambo. "They won't tell me where treasure is. And now I bring them to place, they no want me. Look at this!"

"Bullet," said Sambo's friend simply.

"Bo's'n done that! He call it accident, but he try kill me," Sambo grumbled. "That break big oath; now I tell who I like."

"He bad man, but Fans eat him," his friend assured him. "But how we find treasure?"

"I tell you. Fans watch others, but I go anywhere; they not mind. When they ready for big feast, you bring white men here—we find out," Sambo said confidently.

"They know?" his friend asked.

"They 'board ship'—what called stowaways. Irishman say they know all," Sambo answered, still more confidently.

"What if they no tell?" asked his friend.

"We make them—they soon tell!" Sambo replied significantly. "Now, I go, or others ask where I are."

"You come village when big feast, I ready," said Sambo's friend.

"Good!" said Sambo. "We——"

But Parker and Newton did not wait to hear any more; they did not care to be caught and tortured.

With as little noise as possible, they regained the dark tunnel, and returned to their house in the village, unchallenged.

"Phew!" Newton whistled between his teeth, as he threw himself on a chair.

Parker, sitting in another chair, with his hands in his pockets, frowned thoughtfully.

"If we knew when that American was coming," mused Parker, "we might stick it out, Fred—they may not have that big feast for some time."

"I'm for going as soon as we can," Newton said decidedly.

"That's all very well, but how are we to get away?" Parker asked. "We only know the way we came, which leads back to the shore—where we shall starve; and, if we go farther up the river, we shall get among those Fans, who are evidently cannibals, and we may also run across the gang and be worse off. We can't try the back of the village, as it's only jungle, and you saw to-day what that was like."

"Hang it!" said Newton. "If we go we may be starved, or killed and eaten, and if we stay we may be tortured. Isn't there a third something that would be pleasanter?"

Newton shook his head discouragingly.

"I can't think of one," he said dispiritedly.

"Look here, Jack," Newton said. "Sambo's friend asked him to come here when the big feast was on, I suppose to help him get us down to that hut and wring the secret from us—which, by the way, we couldn't tell if we wanted to. Now, couldn't we barricade one of the rooms here and make a good fight of it?. They won't come in daylight, I suppose, and they seem to be keeping this to themselves, so we may have only those two to deal with. And we might sleep in that room and be able to make a good show with those guns of ours."

"If it happened all as you imagine, that might be our best plan," Parker said, "but these fellows are awfully superstitious, and they won't attack us after dark, you may be sure. They'll probably take us unawares—and one can't guard against that, you know."

"Well, let's run the gantlet of the Fans and the gang, seize one of the canoes, and paddle up the river as fast as we can," proposed Newton.

"And get followed by the whole village, and shot or knifed for thieving? No, that won't do."

"Well, it's your turn now, Jack. I've thought of everything I can," sighed Newton. "And, after all, I'd rather get shot or knifed than be tortured or roasted."

"Oh, they might do other things to us, too," Parker said. "They are savages here, you know, though of a slightly better class."

"Can't we find out when the American is coming?" Newton inquired.

"I don't suppose they know," Parker answered. "In this country they don't keep clockwork time."

"Well——" began Newton.

"Look out—there's the chief!" exclaimed Parker, who was near the window of the room they were sitting in.

They got up, and looked through the window. The chief was walking up to the door of their house.

"He's going to pay us a visit!" exclaimed Newton. The chief had already called upon them once or twice—just to see how they were, he explained.

But this time it could hardly be called a visit; he only popped his head round the door of the house and said:

"You there?"

And when they came forward, he remarked: "All right," and moved on.

"A bit free and easy, isn't he?" said Newton.

"Seems to take an interest in us, though," laughed Parker.

"I say, why shouldn't we go and ask him to protect us?" Newton exclaimed, struck by one of his brilliant ideas. "I don't suppose he knows anything about all this, and he may not be pleased at being kept in the dark, and he may be ready to side with us. What do you think?"

"But suppose he wants to grab all the treasure for himself?" Parker suggested.

"We shan't be worse off," said his friend. "We can tell him it's near One Palm Tree, and that he must keep along the left bank of the river, and then let him make what he can of that. We can tell him that much safely."

"It's not a half-bad idea," Parker said. "The more in this, the merrier, and for us—perhaps—the better fare. We'll ask for an interview with him."

CHAPTER XVII.

A BRIEF INTERVIEW.

The interview with the chief took place the same afternoon. The treasure seekers met him strolling in one of the streets of the village, and asked if they could have a private conversation with him.

He took them to the room where the gramophone was, and, seating himself on one of the chairs, he bade them say what they wanted.

But when the interview had reached this point, Parker and Newton felt it was rather difficult to carry it any further.

They were two strangers, and Sambo's friend was a man of some consequence in the place, possibly the chief's right-hand man—a sort of prime minister even, for all the Canadians could tell.

And there was little more than their bare word—which could be easily contradicted—for all that had taken place, so it required some thinking.

The parrot, if it was still in the hut, might convince the chief that that part of their story was true and make him willing to take the rest on trust, but the parrot could not be dragged in just yet.

Parker began with something quite different.

"Could you tell us," he asked, "when the great American is coming here?" He had not much hope of a satisfactory answer, but the question broke the ice, and couldn't do any harm, even if it did no good.

"Three, four day," the chief answered stolidly.

Jack gazed at his heavy face, with its crimson lips, snub nose, and restless eyes.

It would not do to irritate him by trying to obtain more definite information, Parker decided, and he glanced at Newton out of the corner of his eye to see if he were prepared to take his share in the conversation, but Newton offered him no help; and, while they were both hesitating, the chief said impatiently:

"I no stay here all day; what you want say?"

Newton thought he now saw how the thing should be done; and, using the simplest words he could think of, he began their tale.

"Big treasure here," he said. "We heard of it on board the ship that was wrecked."

"Big treasure! I know; lots fine, rich things. Where treasure?" the chief asked, becoming interested at last.

"We don't know exactly," answered Newton, "but——"

"Then, how you know big treasure here?" the chief interrupted suspiciously.

"Because we heard about it," Newton said earnestly.

"People talk much," the chief remarked contemptuously.

"But we think it is true," Newton asserted. "Some men on the ship knew all about it, and they had a parrot that was to find it for them."

"One charm," the chief said, nodding his head. "I know. Where bird?"

This was their chance, Newton thought, and he determined to make the most of it.

"The men left the ship," he said, "and after they had gone we found the bird, and brought it with us, but the—man who brought us to see you the other day—I don't know his name——"

"He—Egisa," said the chief.

"He said you would not like us to have it here, so he took it——" Newton hesitated; this was the critical part of the story.

"Go on!" exclaimed the chief, his small, liver-colored eyes sparkling angrily.

"And it's in a hut near the river," Newton finished.

The chief rose, plucked off his military cap, and flung it on the table. His dark face became distorted with rage, and he thumped on the floor with a stout bludgeon, and shouted:

"Go! Find Egisa! I ask him why he keep charm bird!"

The two white men ran out of the house instantly to find Sambo's friend.

It was a disagreeable errand, but the

chief was rather terrific when he became enraged; and, as they wished to cast their lot in with his, they thought it advisable to obey his command as promptly as possible.

"I don't think we ought to say anything about their wanting to torture us," said Parker, as they hastened through the streets of the village; "we can't prove it, you know."

"I wasn't going to," Newton replied, "but I hope Egisa isn't down by the hut, or he may keep us there, and I don't believe the chief would care a rap, so long as he gets the bird—he is more interested in that than anything. I suppose these savages think if they have a big charm for anything, the rest doesn't matter; they're sure to get what they want."

"That's it," said Parker; "all we have to depend on is that they may think us more valuable alive than dead; so, if we get back all right, we must pretend we know something about the treasure, and trot out the left bank of the river and the One Palm Tree, and then keep them going as best we can."

"Right-o!" agreed Newton. "I hope he'll land Egisa right."

"Oh, I'm afraid Egisa can take very good care of himself," Parker sighed.

They found Sambo's friend near the door of one of the bamboo houses, talking to another black.

"The chief wishes to see you," Newton informed him, with a more triumphant air than he intended.

Egisa looked at them inquisitively—he was no doubt wondering why the chief had sent them with such a message.

"All right, I come," he said, in an offhand manner, and continued his conversation with the other black.

"The chief wishes you to come at once to the house where the gramophone is," Jack added firmly.

Egisa looked again at the adventurers, his retreating forehead wrinkled with perplexity.

"What he want me for?" he asked.

"He'll tell you," Parker answered. "We were to bring you back with us."

Egisa smiled.

"Why I not come by and by?" he asked.

"Because the chief is in a hurry," Newton answered.

"All right, come along," muttered Egisa.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PARROT IS FRIENDLY.

When he was face to face with the chief, and the latter stormed at him angrily for some minutes—using the language of the tribe—Egisa's bearing changed.

A lowering, ill-used expression still further darkened his already black face, and he began talking so excitedly that Parker and Newton thought the pair would come to blows.

This did not happen, however, for presently both quieted down; and, while Egisa looked at the white men menacingly, the chief said to them:

"He say, how you know he know bird great charm?"

But the adventurers were clear-headed; they had not yet mentioned that part of their story; so they had no difficulty in avoiding the trap set for them—intentionally or not—by the chief.

"We didn't know," Newton answered. "He said he took it because you didn't like that kind of bird——"

Newton hesitated, and then added rather maliciously:

"He said you were funny!"

The veins of the chief's face became swollen, and in the throes of another burst of passion he talked excitedly to Egisa. And again the men went at it hammer and tongs.

This second warfare of words took longer than the first. Newton's last remark evidently required a good deal of explaining, but, one way or another, Egisa must have managed to appease the chief, for, quieting down again, they now began talking to each other in a more friendly fashion.

Then the chief, mopping his face with the sleeve of his military tunic and puffing heavily, sank down wearily on one of the chairs; and, having waited

until he was a little rested, he said, addressing the visitors:

"Now, I speak. He tell me you no understand what he say. He not know bird charm; he only take bird to keep safe for you. If true, all right, I tell him. It finished. Now, we want find treasure. What you know 'bout treasure?"

"It's near One Palm Tree, and you keep along the left bank of the river," Parker explained.

"I no know One Palm Tree. Where One Palm Tree?" the chief asked.

"The men didn't say," answered Parker.

The chief spoke again to Egisa, who shrugged his shoulders, answered shortly, and looked vindictively at the boys.

"He think you know more," the chief said to Parker.

"The parrot knows more than any one," Newton replied; "we heard the men say so, and they were always trying to make it talk."

"Bird talk?" exclaimed the chief, and again he spoke to Egisa, who answered, and shook his head sullenly.

"He say bird not talk," the chief interpreted. "Where other men?"

"They went off in the boats, and after that there was a storm," Newton answered artfully. "We have heard the parrot talk."

"Others drowned, perhaps," said the chief. And then he gave a command in the language of the tribe, and Egisa, muttering angrily, left the room.

"He gone for parrot," the chief remarked. "We see if bird talk."

"It might not talk in that hut," Parker suggested. "It would be rather dark there, and on the ship I think it talked only when there was a light."

Egisa came back with the parrot, which was dancing about and plucking at the bars of its cage with its strong beak.

The cage was placed on the table beside the gramophone, and the chief, Egisa, and the white men gathered round it.

The window of the room they were in looked out upon what Parker termed the back of the village. The fence which inclosed that part of the village came close up to the windows, the jungle was beyond, and there was no danger of any one overlooking the proceedings.

Some of the blacks had followed Egisa to the door of the house, but the bird he was carrying was not so uncommon as to cause more than idle curiosity, and its cage—which excited rather more interest—was supposed to be another trade importation of the great American; and, after seeing Egisa into the house, the busybodies wandered off elsewhere.

The parrot met the gaze of the four pair of eyes with a solemnity suitable to the occasion; and then, as if suddenly recollecting that it had seen the whites before, it ruffled up its feathers, bowed to them very unsteadily from the perch, and shrieked piercingly:

"Hi, come out of that!"

The chief grunted.

"Bird see you, bird talk!" he said approvingly. "All right."

The parrot subsided, and eyed the chief distastefully.

"Make bird talk again!" commanded the chief. "I listen."

"Hello, old girl; how are you?" Newton called to the parrot.

The parrot fluttered its wings, and hopped about in the sunlight, which shone through the open window. Then, with its beak open, it made a noise in its throat, sharpened its beak, and preened its feathers.

Newton put out a finger to stroke its head.

The parrot turned up one eye, stopped preening its feathers, and, putting its head on one side, said with a lackadaisical air:

"Polly, poor Polly, scratch a poll, Polly!" And then it uttered a string of sailors' imprecations.

"What bird say?" the chief inquired.

"It asked me to scratch its head," Newton said.

"Scratch? What that?" asked the chief. "That charm?"

Newton checked a smile.

"No, like this," he explained, rubbing the parrot's head with his finger.

The chief looked disappointed.

"Humph!" he muttered, and he and Egisa talked quietly to each other, while the visitors continued to make friends with the parrot.

"It finished!" the chief exclaimed presently. "Egisa think he know where One Palm Tree. Three, four day. We go, see where treasure; take bird. You come. You make bird talk. Bird great charm!"

Parker and Newton looked at Egisa, but this time he gave them no assistance, so, following the precedent of their former interview with the chief, they withdrew without making further conversation.

CHAPTER XIX.

ATTACKED.

The Canadian chaps were not at all dissatisfied with the result of their interview with the chief.

He had treated them and Egisa very fairly; and, though they had now made an open enemy of Egisa, they believed the chief would protect them from any foul play.

They had been able to conceal their knowledge of Egisa and his friend's scheme for obtaining the whole of the treasure for themselves, so Egisa was not desperate, and they might hope he would leave them alone for the present.

They were sitting in their bamboo house the day after the interview, talking it over for the fiftieth time and planning to slip away from the expedition when it was on the march, and they were trying to imagine what would occur if the chief's party met the Fans and the gang from the ship, when one of the villagers came to them with a message from the chief.

The messenger's trade English was of a very poor quality, but the boys understood that they were to be ready to join the chief—who was going to "walk up river"—at once.

It seemed that the chief was not a man to let the grass grow under his feet, but, as this suited them admirably, they seized their guns, with all they had in the way of luggage, and went outside.

There was a great bustle in the village. The chief's departure was an event that everybody seemed to take an active interest in.

From all parts of the village men came trooping to surround and question a little group of the blacks, who—armed to the teeth with guns and jungle knives—were lounging beside a heap of packages.

Newton and Parker waited outside the throng, looking on and envying its knowledge of a language that conveyed nothing to them.

A man rushed distractedly out of the tunnel of vegetation that led to the river, and ran through the village.

It was Sambo again, and he wished to see the chief.

Then another message from the chief was given to the visitors, bidding them come to the gramophone house as quickly as possible.

They went there at a record pace.

In the room they found the chief, Egisa, and Sambo.

All three looked much upset.

"He on ship with you!" the chief exclaimed, addressing the Canadians as they entered, and pointing at Sambo.

The white men did not reply to this, and Sambo glared at them vacantly.

"He tell you what happen," said the chief.

"The other men hear that you here," Sambo said, breathing noisily, as if he had been running fast. "One come to Fans' camp; he talk. Others think you got charm bird. Others tell Fans if they get it, they be well, strong men. Fans come for it!"

"They fight, we fight," said the chief. "And you hide. Ditch other side of fence; you and parrot hide there. If fight good, you all right; if fight bad—we see."

Parker and Newton thought they would rather see what happened, but, helped by the three men, they managed to secrete themselves and the parrot in the ditch.

"'Ware snakes, Jack!" Newton said,

as they settled down in their not too comfortable bed of rough bush and grass.

"I wonder when the fight will come off," Parker mused. "We must get a sight of it if we can, or we shan't know how it's going."

"There's a hole under the fence, where the bank has fallen," Newton said, shifting his position, "and I can just see the tunnel from here, and part of the village."

"That's good," said Parker. "But take care they don't see you."

"I hope Polly won't sing out: 'Hi, come out of that!' when the enemy comes," said Newton, looking under the fence again.

The chief's packages had been cleared away, the women were safe from harm in the houses, and the rest of the blacks—all well armed—were being sent to their different posts, some to guard the houses, others to guard the streets.

Twenty or thirty—four deep—remained near the tunnel, and a squad straggled down to defend the landing stage.

Ere long the watchers heard some desultory firing. The passage from the river was being attacked and defended.

Several of the villagers came running back, some wounded, and some in good condition. The Fans were advancing—victorious.

The blacks near the tunnel closed up, and prepared to fire a volley when the enemy should charge through.

Led by a strapping negro, who had the skin of some spotted animal flung over his right shoulder, the Fans dashed into the village.

They were a magnificent set of savages. With the exception of a loin cloth, they were naked, and as ferocious in appearance as one can picture the natives of Africa.

Their brass bracelets and anklets glittered and clashed impressively, and the cries and yells they uttered might have cowed a much more courageous army of savages than those they were fighting.

A general mêlée ensued. Sometimes one side, sometimes the other, getting the best of it.

There was a mad scamper for the gramophone house.

Newton saw the man who wore the spotted skin leaning out of one of the windows of the house and looking in their direction, and whispered:

"Shall I shoot at him?"

"You might try to drive him away from there," answered Parker.

"There's so much noise and shooting going on, he won't be able to tell where it comes from," Newton remarked, and let off his gun.

The shot clipped one of the warrior's ears, and he fell back into the room.

"That should teach him not to poke his nose into other people's business," Newton said, with satisfaction.

The savage, with his ear bleeding freely, rushed out of the gramophone house, and met Egisa—who was rallying the blacks of the village—and they fought together, their keen knives flashing in the air like streaks of silver.

As if encouraged by their prowess, the fatigued combatants circled round their leaders, and fought with renewed energy.

But the tide had turned in the defenders' favor, and, step by step, they drove the Fans into the tunnel, and pursued them through it.

Egisa's late opponent lay dead among many of his tribe, and, with some of the other villagers and his chief, Egisa waited at the mouth of the tunnel to see if his own men would follow up their success or be driven back once more by the Fans.

CHAPTER XX.

THE TREASURE HUNT STARTS.

It was not until evening that Parker and Newton were allowed to leave their uncomfortable place of concealment.

Then they heard that the victory of the villagers was complete, and that to show the Fans that they could not murder their neighbors and escape severe punishment, a large band of the villagers had been sent to burn their dwellings on the other side of the river, and

—if possible—exterminate the whole tribe.

This caused a further delay, and the chief's "walk up river" had to be put off for an indefinite time.

However, news soon came that the Fans' village had been destroyed, that the Fans had been dispersed, and that the treasure-hunting expedition was to start.

From Egisa—who had of lately become suspiciously friendly with the two whites—they learned that the ship's gang had disappeared with the Fans, and that, as far as Egisa or the chief knew, the river had been cleared of all their enemies.

Egisa also told them that the real object of the treasure expedition was concealed from those it did not concern by the report that the chief was going upon a hunting and rubber-gathering expedition.

Soon, all preparations being made, the chief's canoe—preceded by a smaller one, in which were Egisa and Sambo—glided up the river, propelled by six blacks, with the chief, Parker, Newton, and the parrot under its palm-thatched cabin.

When they were well away from the village, the river broadened, and its thick hedges gave place to bushes and trees tangled with climbing plants which hung over the water, covered with flowers.

Now and then the banks of the river could be seen through the tangle, with reeds and water lilies growing close to them. Lethargic crocodiles were plentiful, and very active mosquitoes.

At the end of a day's journey, the canoes were paddled to a shallow lagoon, and the whole party made ready to camp on the left bank of the river.

There was an open space there, where the trees grew far apart. An extensive valley, shut in by well-wooded hills, stretched far away into the distance.

Gray and brown rocks lay on the bank and in the river, and beyond the lagoon was a rapid, over which the water splashed in broken wreaths of white foam.

The white men were allowed to roam on the banks as they pleased, but for them to attempt to escape from the blacks at nightfall would have been worse than useless, and they watched with great interest all the preparations that were made for the night, as it was the first time they had camped out with savages.

A shot fired farther up the river made them hurry in that direction, and they got there in time to see a crocodile landed, and—with much shouting and laughter—cut up for their supper.

Returning later to where the fire was blazing, they found Egisa fussily superintending the cooking of the evening meal, which consisted chiefly of baked crocodile.

The white men found the strange meat fairly palatable, though the strong flavor was rather too perceptible to be pleasant. But the blacks seemed to enjoy it unreservedly, and ate of it voraciously, the chief being served with at least half a dozen liberal helpings.

After supper, they turned in for the night; the chief—rolled in blankets—lying on cushions brought from his canoe, and Newton, Parker, and the chief's retinue with mats under them and blankets round them.

CHAPTER XXI.

EGISA'S CUNNING.

The following morning, the Canadians were up early, and, rather to their surprise, Egisa—after breakfast—proposed that they should go for a walk with him.

He took them up the valley for a two hours' tramp.

Jack and Fred had their guns with them, and they were two to one. As they were under the chief's patronage, they believed there was little danger of Egisa trying to deal anything but fairly with them.

When they got back to the camp, the chief—who was reclining upon his cushions in the shade cast by a big tree—called them before him. And they heard a shrill voice:

"Hi, come out of that! Polly, poor.

Polly! Scratch a poll, Polly! I see you!"

They looked up, and saw the parrot's cage hanging from a bough of the tree the chief was sitting under, and that Polly was in a lively humor.

"You found One Palm Tree?" the chief inquired, looking at Egisa and the boys.

Parker and Newton did not know that they were supposed to have been looking for it. During the walk, Egisa had shown no sign of being interested in anything but his own thoughts, but now he scanned the chief's face critically, and appeared dissatisfied to find that it had not altered at all during their absence.

Shaking his head, he answered the chief impatiently:

"We find nothing. Look again after dinner."

With one of those flashes of intuition that come to all of us at times, Newton read the expression of bored dissatisfaction on Egisa's face as easily and correctly as the printed words in a book, and it struck him as being extremely odd. Why should Egisa be disappointed at finding that the chief was in his usual health?

"We no stay here always!" the chief said crossly. "If you not find it after dinner, we go other place."

"It take time," Egisa said enigmatically.

"There parrot," the chief—pointing upward—said to the two whites. "You talk to him, perhaps he tell us."

So they talked to the parrot, and amused themselves with it until dinner-time without any important result, and after that they went for another walk with Egisa.

But Egisa was as moody as ever, and when they came again in sight of the camp, One Palm Tree was still undiscovered by them.

The two friends were walking a little ahead of Egisa, when they saw that the camp was in a state of commotion.

Some of the blacks were running about and calling out directions to one another, and Sambo and two of the men who had paddled the chief's canoe up the river were standing by the chief and yelling at him, while another black had a stick of burning wood, which he was thrusting in the chief's face. It looked as if they were murdering or torturing him.

Egisa saw all this, too.

"Chief sick, very sick! Spirit gone!" he cried, as he sprang past his companions and ran up to his chief.

The Canadians ran after him, and then stood at a little distance and watched.

The chief lay extended upon his cushions, his face a ghastly shade of grayish black, his limbs rigid, and his mouth held wide open by a stout fish bone.

Taking the burning wood, Egisa swung it vigorously to and fro beneath the chief's chin, and he and the other men shouted madly to the chief's spirit to come back and reënter his body by way of his mouth, which was being carefully kept open for that purpose.

The Canadians would have liked to suggest a more rational method of helping the old chief to recover his senses, but either his countrymen's rough treatment suited him as well as anything they could have done, or he recovered in spite of it—for in about half an hour his eyes opened amid general rejoicings.

And when the fish bone had been removed from his mouth, he was able to say a few words, though what they were the boys could only guess, as he spoke in his own language.

But their effect was instantaneous, for Sambo and the other blacks immediately scuttled out of his sight, and only Egisa remained with him.

The two whites—though not told to do so—were moving away also, but Egisa waved his hand to a spot which was only fifty feet or so away, and commanded them to stay there. He did not want them out of his sight, and no chance of escape was to be given them, it seemed.

Egisa sat beside the chief until he fell into a quiet sleep, then he crossed over and sat down near the visitors.

"'Fraid chief very sick," he said,

scowling at them. "'Fraid bad things happen. Chief bewitched! If he no better, send for witch doctor, he soon find out what matter."

Newton felt a cold shiver run down his spine. Were they to be made the scapegoats for this unfortunate accident for Egisa's own evil purposes? The chief might not mind Egisa's torturing them if he was made to believe they had bewitched him!

And then Newton remembered the expression on Egisa's face that morning when the chief had spoken to him.

CHAPTER XXII.

GRAVE DANGER.

Newton wished that he and Parker could talk to each other with as much freedom as they had in their bamboo hut.

He would have liked to tell Parker of his suspicion that Egisa was hatching a diobolical plot and that they were to be drawn into its meshes, but out there in the woods and in the midst of the blacks' camp, they could only communicate private and important news to each other by looks and signs, which were often misunderstood.

The chief had several fainting fits after that first one, and every hour he grew weaker. Was it only that he had eaten too much crocodile?

Egisa wandered through the camp, wringing his hands and talking of witchcraft to every one he met, and the chief's black servants crouched all the day—when they were not appealing to the chief's spirit to return to his body—on the bank of the river, and talked together in timid whispers.

Witchcraft—still believed in by the ignorant savages—was a crime which any one in that country might be accused of when a person of consequence fell ill or died, and the suspicion of having committed that crime and the punishments for it were equally to be dreaded.

Forty-eight hours after the first fainting fit, the chief was writhing upon his cushions; his limbs were horribly contorted; his eyes were rolling in their sockets, and his black hands picked at the blankets which covered him. The end was near.

Egisa tore round the camp in frantic grief, smiting his head and chest, and declaring that if the chief's life were not spared the sky would grow dark until the day came when he should live again.

He dropped from the river bank into the smaller canoe, unmoored it, and, crying out in his own language that he was going for a witch doctor, and repeating this in English for the whites' and Sambo's benefit, he paddled excitedly up the river. And as he departed, he called back to Sambo a pointed injunction to see that no one ran away.

The Canadian chaps went in search of their guns, which they had left leaning against a tree—it was as good an opportunity for slipping away quietly as they were likely to get, they thought.

But Sambo pounced upon them as they reached the tree, and, seizing one of their guns and presenting it at them, while he knocked down and put his foot on the other, he said:

"You sit; no harm come to you. You try go, I shoot!"

They sat down, and Sambo walked off with their guns, and joined the other blacks, who had again gathered round the old chief.

Presently all the blacks began howling and wailing—the chief was dead!

Sambo covered the chief's body with a blanket, and the negroes returned to the bank of the river, and crouched there, wailing pathetically.

Egisa's canoe shot round a bend in the river. Egisa was paddling, and the witch doctor was sitting in the stern.

The negroes on the bank sent up piercing howls and shrieks. Egisa, looking over his shoulder, spoke a word or two to the witch doctor, and brought the canoe to the bank, and the two leaped ashore.

Sambo conducted them to where the old chief lay.

The witch doctor snatched off the blanket, and stared long at the dead man's face. Then he gave a weird cry, and, dropping on his hands and knees, ran round the body, clawing with his

hands at the leaves and earth which surrounded it, picking up great handfuls, and smelling and tasting both the leaves and the earth.

Having done this, he stood up, the blanket was replaced, and he, Egisa, and Sambo talked vehemently together in trade English—evidently for the benefit of Parker and Newton.

"You call others," said the witch doctor. "I soon find who done it!"

"He bewitched?" asked Egisa.

"Yes, he made sick, he die," said the witch doctor, raising two handfuls of earth and leaves above his head. "I have it here. And I have rattle—we soon find out who done it."

"He die, much pain. He not say anything," said Sambo.

"He bewitched!" repeated the witch doctor. "He waiting now for others to die."

"They die!" cried Egisa, and he called up the negroes who were howling and wailing on the bank of the river.

Two of them came, trembling in every limb and with faces distorted by fear, but the other four jumped into the chief's canoe, and paddled off.

Egisa called to them to stop, and, taking one of the Canadians' guns from Sambo, he fired at the canoe, which was near the rapid. The canoe swerved, and nearly struck a rock; one of the negroes fended it off, and it rounded the bend of the river safely.

Egisa spoke in his own language angrily. Then, in English, he said to the two adventurers:

"You come here. Witch doctor see who kill chief."

They moved forward as unwillingly as the two negroes had done.

Egisa motioned to them and the negroes to stand round the witch doctor. The latter gazed at them curiously.

He was a debased-looking negro—old, thin, and plastered with the dirt of many years. His small, cunning eyes gleamed with a murderous light. A horn of hair, mud-stiffened and bound by some trailing plant, stood erect on either side of his head. His nose was flat, and his lips curled fiendishly over a double row of yellow fangs.

He hopped backward and forward, holding in his hand a wooden rattle, which hissed and squeaked as he shook it from time to time.

"He hiss when not sure, he squeak when he think he sure, and he rattle when quite sure!" he yelled to Egisa. "Now, you see!" and he dived forward, and thrust out his rattle at Parker.

Parker, taken by surprise, drew back, and the rattle hissed.

"He not sure!" yelled the witch doctor.

The rattle was poked forward at Newton, but he was expecting it, and did not flinch. It squeaked!

"He think he know!" howled the witch doctor.

Then the rattle was thrust out at one of the negroes, who yelled with fright. But the rattle remained silent.

"He not know," said the old faker mournfully, and he thrust it out at the second negro. The rattle continued dumb.

"He not know 'gain!" groaned the wizard; "he sleepy. I wake him up!" He banged the rattle on his knee.

Egisa and Sambo were, it seemed, above suspicion, as they neither stood with the others, nor had the rattle thrust at them.

"Ha, he talk now!" the witch doctor said, running round again and waving the rattle over his head.

Whir! His-ss! Rattle, rattle!

The thing had rattled and stopped at one of the negroes.

"He done it," said the witch doctor solemnly.

The negro collapsed upon the ground, embracing his knees and letting his head rest upon them.

Whir! His-ss! Rattle, rattle!

The rattle accused another negro, who collapsed as the first one had done.

"They done it!" the witch doctor said, leering at Egisa.

Egisa made a sign to Newton and Parker to step back.

Squatting down, the witch doctor laid aside his rattle, and produced two poi-

son beans. He gave one to each of the negroes.

Holding the beans in front of them, the negroes chanted the formula used on such occasions, and swallowed the beans; then they embraced their knees, and let their heads rest upon them again. Some time passed, then the negroes' limbs began to twitch, their arms loosened, and they fell back stiff, numb, and helpless.

The Canadians, who had watched the whole barbarous ceremony with horror-stricken eyes and without the power to interfere or put a stop to it, now turned their heads away—they could look on no longer.

And Newton believed he saw the whole depth and breadth of Egisa's horrible scheme.

Egisa had taken this way of getting rid of all those who might have come between him and his complete possession of the treasure, of all those who might have prevented his torturing its secret out of the white men or might have born witness against him.

The chief had been Egisa's first victim, Newton fully believed; then the poor negroes had followed.

And now for Parker and himself there awaited a fate more terrible.

TO BE CONTINUED.

The next section of this serial will appear in the November mid-month TOP-NOTCH, *out October 15th. Back numbers may be obtained of news dealers or the publishers.*

When His Ship Came In

By Irwin Thomas

Wherever there was a flag and a country, Maloney, soldier of fortune, was against them. But he was a pretty good sort, at that

MALONEY read the letter through for the second time, smiled a little, and laid it down on the table in front of him, and gazed out of the window that overlooked the clotheslines of a half dozen flat houses.

Darcy Maloney was a soldier of fortune. He admitted, confessed, and even at times boasted he had been in more unsuccessful revolutions than any man living.

Flinty-hearted monarchs had suppressed Maloney time and again. He had been the subject of international correspondence between the United States and Brazil, the former country and Honduras, and had just escaped being shot. Yet with it all, he liked it.

He had gone to South Africa with a Red Cross badge on his arm, and exchanged it for shoulder straps an hour after he reached the Boer lines.

Wherever there was a flag and a country, he was against them as soon as any discontented leader raised the standard of revolt. He would have fought as cheerfully for the Young Turks as he would for the Bulgarians in a war with the sultan.

He shed trouble as a duck does water. He frequently said that he was even with the world, inasmuch as he had given nothing to it and obtained nothing from it. He had started as a revolutionist with nothing, and after a dozen years of honest, but unfruitful, endeavor to make over the political map, had failed to do more than add to the railroad mileage in a few of the little republics as a prisoner of war.

For four months he had been quartered in the rooming house, where he stood waiting for Opportunity to knock at his door. The only knock up to date had been that of the landlady, who had a fondness for reminding him that his room rent was due.

He had earned a little money posing for artists, and had been successively a grenadier, a cavalryman, and an officer

of artillery for a canvas that was to hang in the national capitol, commemorative of the struggle of America for independence.

But this had not sufficed to keep the wolf from the door. His uniform that he wore as a colonel in South Africa was in an Eighth Avenue pawnshop. His sword of the Brazilian trouble was also in pawn, and at last he himself was where he expected some legal and perhaps cruel move on the part of his landlady.

Maloney was thirty-eight years old. He had an erectness of carriage and an elasticity of step in strange contrast to the patches of gray that were at his temples, and the face that was so tanned that no four months of idleness would bleach it. He was close to six feet tall, and fairly good-looking.

Sometimes he dreamed what might have happened had he won out in some of the banana republics wherein he had led shoeless, badly uniformed, ferociously armed armies of liberty against the constituted authorities.

He wondered if he would have been content to sit down, roll cigarettes, and help rob the natives as the right hand of the new president, or whether he would have taken a part of the treasury some time and sailed away.

"Well, it can't be any worse than it is," he remarked, as he looked at the letter. "If they have anything to offer, I'll take it!"

The letter that had reached Maloney was from a companion in arms from whom he had not heard in a year or more. It told him that the writer would reach the city in a few days and was coming for business and needed his aid.

To Maloney, it meant that another coffee planter had grown tired of being taxed, and was ready to put up the money for arms and men to lead.

II.

Further dreams were cut short by a knock at his door. There was no mistaking the knock. It was one that would not be denied, and was as insistent in its sound as though it were a policeman with a warrant and a club.

But Maloney was not of the kind to give in too quickly. He never had surrendered without firing a shot or endeavoring to make the best terms he could. He knew that before him would stand Mrs. Murtha.

Maloney had admired her a hundred times.

"What a corps commander she would have made if she'd been a man. Heaven help the paymaster who failed to get around on time or the quartermaster or the commissary that was lax," he said to himself.

"Who's there?" cried Maloney gently, in response to the knock.

"It's me," came the authoritative, if ungrammatical, reply.

"Oh, you, Mrs. Murtha! Just a minute," replied Maloney, and he put the letter in his pocket, and made several marches and countermarches mentally, and started to throw up earthworks in his mind to meet her onslaught as he opened the door.

"I suppose you have come up to see about the rent?" he said pleasantly.

He did not propose to let Mrs. Murtha figure that she had surprised him. He wished her to know that he had gauged her strength, analyzed her position, and was ready to meet her.

"I have!" she replied, passing the question back to him, placing upon him the burden of evidence.

"Well?" said Maloney. And he looked her over.

She was sixty. There was not a gray hair in her head. There was a face that showed that in her day she had been a queen, and now, as a dowager, she was of the stuff by which kingdoms are ruled.

Her eyes were blue and steely; her mouth was neither pleasant nor hard; the nose was large for a woman, and the chin had enough of the undershot to prevent any one from mistaking it for the chin of a woman without determination.

As she stood before him, Maloney decided that she looked like Napoleon.

Mrs. Murtha liked not the "well" of

Maloney. She had fenced far enough, and with a directness that could not be misunderstod replied:

"Well, I want it!"

To Maloney it was a demand for an unconditional surrender. He expected to ask what she was going to do about it, and would not have been surprised to hear her say: "I shall move upon your works within an hour," or something equally as peremptory.

He parried again, mildly replying:

"I know that, and I am sorry about it, but it isn't as bad as you suspect."

"I suppose you'll say you haven't got it," she said, looking fixedly at him.

A door closed down the hall, and Maloney, with a delicacy that she did not think he possessed, suggested that she come inside, as there was no need of other roomers knowing their business. She came in, and, as he closed the door, he remarked:

"You know, Mrs. Murtha, where one roomer becomes lax, it is likely to set a bad example."

"That wasn't a roomer; that was my daughter," she answered, smiling for the first time, but added: "If you have anything to say about this rent, I wish you'd say it."

"Well, it's just this, Mrs. Murtha: I am expecting some money in a few days. I just received a letter—you know you put it under the door this morning. I have been expecting it for some time. To-day I get it, and the man, instead of sending me the money, is coming to New York. He is coming by the steamer following the one that brought the letter. I suppose under the circumstances he did not want to send the money by mail. Of course he would, if he had known that I needed it. But I didn't like to say that I was nearly out of money. You know how that is. This man never really thinks of my needing money, you know. Ha, ha!"

"I hate to be dunning people for money," replied Mrs. Murtha, and Maloney saw that back of Napoleon there was the woman; that the blue in the eye and the upward curve of the mouth did mean something, after all.

"I didn't always keep a lodging house, and, although I try not to, I get some queer characters," she went on. "There's that young artist on the top floor back; he owes for three months, and wants to paint my daughter's portrait. Heavens! I can't give the portrait to the landlord for the rent, can I?"

"Not if he is like any I have met," answered Maloney, laughing, and he added: "It will be a few days only till my ship comes in."

III.

When Mrs. Murtha left the room, there was the conviction in her heart that she liked Maloney. She said so to herself as she went down to the back parlor, where, with her daughter, she occupied a folding couch, that there might be more rooms to let in the house.

She took from a place on the mantel the photograph of a man in the uniform of a colonel of the United States Army, and kissed it with all the reverence that was in her heart. There was a tear on her cheek when she replaced it and dried her eyes quickly as her daughter's step was heard outside.

"Not crying, darling, are you?" asked the daughter, as she placed her arm about the mother's waist. "What was it?"

"Nothing, dearie, nothing. I was up to see Mr. Maloney. It was the first time I ever talked with him much. But he reminded me so much of your dear, dear father. Not that they look alike, but he seems like a soldier; his manner recalled so many memories, I could almost see myself at an army post again."

"Please don't, mother," said the girl, the color leaving her face.

"Forgive me, my child. It was thoughtless of me. I am getting old, I guess."

"No, no, darling; you just imagine that. Your hair is dark, and your eyes are bright, and you haven't a wrinkle on your brow," said the girl softly, as she smoothed back the hair from the

forehead of the mother, and kissed her. Then she fell to commonplaces, asking:

"Did he pay his room rent?"

"No. In a few days he will have some money. That letter he received this morning was the forerunner of money, he said."

"What did the artist say?"

"He offered to paint your portrait for the rent."

The girl shook her head sadly and smiled, saying:

"I'm afraid you are a bad collector, mother, but what of it? There is enough hardship in the world without our adding to it. I wonder often what some of our former friends would say if they saw us here, trying to make a living renting rooms."

"They would say what they did when I told them two years ago that I was going to do it; that I should live on your father's pension, which a grateful country gives us," said the mother bitterly.

There was a ring at the bell, and a messenger boy came in with a telegram in his hand.

"Maloney?" he asked, thrusting a book and pencil into the hands of the young woman.

"I don't know whether he has gone out or not," said she, as she signed for it. Then she turned to the parlor door, where her mother stood, and asked if Mr. Maloney had gone out.

"Not yet, Miss Murtha," said a voice at the head of the stairs, and Maloney came down. He took the telegram, opened it, and read it.

"No bad news, I trust," said the girl.

"No; on the contrary, very good!" he answered, as he thrust it in his pocket and went out into the street.

The telegram read:

Am at the Prince William Hotel. Come soon as you can. BANCROFT.

IV.

"You nearly beat the letter," said Maloney, as he shook his old friend, Ned Bancroft, by the hand, and was asked what he'd have to drink at the same time.

There was no need to guess at it. Bancroft, soldier of fortune, had money!

"That letter," said he, "came mostly by boat. I came part of the way by rail. I wanted to get here. I want you to go back with me, and I want you to help me while we're here."

"How many men do you want, and when do you want to start?" asked Maloney.

"Say, Darcy, what do you think this is, another revolution?" asked Bancroft.

"Didn't you say you wanted my aid?" asked Maloney. "What other aid can you want of me?"

Bancroft leaned back in his chair, and laughed till his side ached, while the other blew rings from his cigar, and finally said:

"Well, for my part, I don't see what is so funny about it!"

"Darcy, old boy, it's funny to me only. Now, listen. I'll be as brief with you as I can. First, I have quit fighting governments. I am no longer making faces at presidents and crowned heads; I'm through. Besides, it would take millions to revolute just a little in Mexico, and your Uncle Sam would have something to say. Darcy, I'm half owner in a mine, and this time I'm with the government, and it's with me. I want you. There's a lot of money to be made down there. I've got other claims. There is always a chance for a little fight with thieves attacking the bullion trains out of the mountains, if you can't stand peace. Will you go?"

"It ain't what I expected. I thought it was a scrap," sighed Maloney. "You told me you thought it would be a good place to start one."

"That was two years ago, but will you go?"

"Oh, of course, I'll go," said Darcy, and then he paused. "I might as well tell you first as last, I'm flat broke. So broke my landlady, dear old soul, was pestering me this morning."

"When you go back, feed her a few of these. Maybe she will like you better," replied Bancroft. And he peeled

off five hundred dollars in fifty and one-hundred-dollar bills from a roll.

"If she has been good to you," he added, "give this to her as a present, and let one of her children cut its teeth on it." And he passed over a twenty-dollar gold piece.

For the first time in his life, Maloney felt unnerved. He had been summoned not to fight, but for a peaceful purpose. As he stood figuring the next move, his friend rattled on:

"I've got an engagement with a lawyer and a man in Wall Street, who are interested in this affair with me. I'll be here for dinner, and I'll tell you the other proposition—that I want you to help me in."

Darcy had walked to the Prince William Hotel. He went away in a taxi, with a messenger boy by his side, instructing the boy how to take certain pawn tickets and collect certain articles of wardrobe, military and otherwise, that were reposing in various places.

There was nothing parsimonious about Maloney. If he had money, he spent it, but his obligations were the things he recognized first. He met the daughter of the landlady in the hall.

"Oh, Miss Murtha," said he, "I owe your mother a little money. It's four weeks' room rent. There it is, and a friend of mine sent this to her, saying she should let one of her children cut its teeth on it." And he handed out the twenty-dollar gold piece.

"I can't accept that, Mr. Maloney," said the young woman, blushing, confused and a bit indignant.

"Miss Murtha, you don't understand," pleaded Maloney. "The best friend I've got on earth—a man for whom I'd go anywhere—knows that your mother is a friend of mine, and he sent her that as a pocket piece, because he's got more of it than he knows what to do with. Take it, please. If it don't do anything else, it will pay that artist's room rent. Your mother shouldn't stand that loss. Besides, it isn't mine. On my honor as a gentleman, it was sent to your mother with the instructions I give you, for one of her children to cut its teeth on."

"She has only one, and I've cut mine," said the young woman, laughing slightly.

"Then cut your wisdom teeth on it," was the laughing reply, and Maloney thrust the coin into her hand and went upstairs.

V.

It was a different Darcy Maloney that came downstairs at six o'clock, on his way to dine at the Prince William. He remarked to himself that it pays to have things hung up when they are pawned.

The messenger boy had been a valet, in a way; he had attended to many things, and Maloney was in faultless evening attire when he entered a waiting taxi. Disliking everything that savored of conspicuousness, he knew that in the hotel he would attract more attention without evening clothes than with them. Besides, he felt for once that he was a man of peace. Over the coffee and cigars, Bancroft asked his aid.

"You know, Darcy, when I met you five years ago, and you asked me where I had soldiered, I lied a little about that?" questioned the friend.

"I knew when you started to drill those niggers you were from West Point," replied Darcy.

"Then I don't have to tell you. Well, I left the army because I had to. I was clean as a hound's tooth in the affair. I was the victim of circumstances. I resigned, and I have the proof of that little affair now. There was a girl in the case. That is, she was in it to the extent that my being forced out of the army prevented me from holding up my head and asking her to marry me, when she knew I wanted to do so. I went away without even saying good-by. I have come back to find her. I want to tell her that now I can face the world like a man and want her to be my wife."

"Maybe she's the wife of some one else now," said Maloney.

"Not she! Three years ago she and her mother seemed to drop out of sight. I know that all they had to live on was

what little money her father had left and his pension. He was a colonel of artillery, and was killed by the bursting of a gun at its official test. He was Colonel Ambrose Murtha."

VI.

Murtha! The name went home to Maloney. He thought, and then he thought what he seemed impossible.

"And this widow; what kind of a woman is she? What does she look like?" asked Maloney.

"When I was with the Twenty-sixth, we younger officers used to refer to her as the 'Little Corporal,'" replied Bancroft.

"Has she got black hair and steel-blue eyes, a chin like the rock of Gibraltar, and a mouth that says she's boss?" queried Maloney.

"She has! That is Mrs. Murtha! You've met her? You know her and her daughter, Margaret?" Bancroft cried, rising from his seat.

"I know her, and I know her daughter. Whether her name is Margaret or Inez, Alice or Julia, I don't know, but she's the only daughter Mrs. Murtha has," replied Maloney.

"Where is she?" demanded Bancroft anxiously.

"Tush, tush, man—easy! You are not so sure it's the same one, and, besides, if her daughter is following your instructions, as given to me, she's cutting her wisdom teeth on that twenty-dollar gold piece I gave to her this afternoon."

"You don't mean——" said Bancroft, but he got no further, Maloney interrupting with:

"I mean that my landlady's name is Murtha, that she didn't always keep a rooming house, and she has a daughter and reminds me of Napoleon."

"Come on," said Bancroft, rising.

"Where?" asked Maloney.

"Home with you. It's only quarter past nine. I'll settle this thing to-night."

As Darcy opened the front door with his night key and the pair stood in the lower hall, there came from the parlor the sound of a piano. Some one was playing a march with the soft pedal on the piano, touching the keys so delicately that there was little sound in the hall.

"That's the tune you taught those niggers," said Maloney.

"Great Scott, man! It's the battle march of the Twenty-sixth! We loved it so! It was our own song!" And the tears were in the eyes of Bancroft as he knocked on the parlor door.

It was opened by the girl, who, in the full light of the hall, first caught sight of Maloney and smiled, then of Bancroft, and seemed paralyzed.

"Margaret!" said he, with a tenderness that conveyed more feeling than many a volume.

"Ned!" was the only word—a half-hysterical little scream of a word—as he took her in his arms.

When they turned to look, Darcy Maloney was halfway upstairs, not looking back. Like a good soldier, he knew when to retreat whether ordered or not.

A Dangerous Definition

CHILD—"Mamma, what is a common person?"

Mother—"Why, child, a common person is—is—well, it's a person that we do not associate with. Why do you ask?"

Child—"'Cause Mrs. Nextdoor said you was a common person."

Hard to Suit Him

MAGISTRATE—"How comes it that you dared to break into this gentleman's house in the dead of night?"

Prisoner—"Why, your worship, the other time you reproached me for stealing in broad daylight. Ain't I to be allowed to work at all?"

At King Doolittle's Court

By John Montague

An unearthly place, eh? Yes! You won't find this kingdom on any map of our planet. You won't find it anyway, unless you are one of the chaps who go gadding through space in an airship, and a very high flyer at that. A breezy American discovered it; also the Princess of the Blue Hair, and added a new chapter to Venusian romantic history.

(COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE)

CHAPTER I.

A TOOTH IN DANGER.

THE year 1968 was one long to be remembered on the planet Venus. On the third of April, that year, the Princess Glorious sat in the garden of her father's courtyard and dug her pretty golden toes in the pink sands, while a slight frown puckered her fair golden forehead.

Suddenly she whistled shrilly, and, in response, a servant appeared from the castle.

"Go and fetch Wistus!" she ordered.

The servant disappeared.

Soon he returned, followed by an elderly gentleman whose beard betokened his advanced years. His head was absolutely bald. He stood at respectful attention on one foot, his arms akimbo.

"You sent for me, your highness?"

"Yes. Are you not reputed the wisest man in the entire kingdom?"

"The distinction is mine," answered the prophet, with a perceptible chest inflation.

"Why?" asked the Princess Glorious.

"Because my wisdom tooth is larger by the fraction of an inch than that of any other man in the domain."

"If you lost that tooth, you would not be quite so wise?" tentatively queried the young woman.

"If I lost my wisdom tooth I might as well go and plant myself in the yard of gravestones," replied the renowned Wistus, a tear oozing from his left eye.

"You are in danger of separating yourself from the tooth!" said Glorious ominously.

"Oh, say not so!" exclaimed the old man, changing from one foot to the other.

"But I have said so," retorted the princess; "and my prophecy will come true, unless——"

"Unless?" gasped Wistus.

"Unless you can do the favor which I am about to ask."

"Trust me to accomplish it, no matter how difficult," responded the wise person, changing his underpinning for the second time.

"If you cannot grant me the favor, you have no one but yourself to blame," continued the princess. "In the *Fleeting Cloud* of last Sunday an article appeared, under your name, having to do with certain unexplored planets. Among other things, you gave as your opinion that these planets are inhabited. Is it not so?"

"I confess to the authorship," replied Wistus feebly; "but the story was based more on imagination than fact. I did not suppose that it would ever come under the august eye of your highness."

"However, it did come under my eye," said Princess Glorious, "and it interested me deeply. So deeply, in fact, that I have been unable to sleep for thinking about it ever since.

"Five minutes ago I received a beautiful inspiration," she went on. "You are aware of my approaching marriage

to Prince Hubbub, and my ardent dislike, not only for his ugly presence, but for every other member of his sex in this world. One thing I cannot love, and that is a bald head! I shall never marry a bald-headed man, and the kingdom may go to the rabbits before I do!"

"But, your highness, all men in our world are bald-headed—they are born that way!"

"Tell me something I don't know!" snapped the princess.

"Er—but the lack of hair on the crown is amply balanced by the profusion of hair on the lip and chin," pleaded the old man.

"That's another fault. I detest hair on the lip and chin. Never could I be happy with a husband who was mustached and bearded."

Old Wistus dropped his arms to his sides in despair.

"I don't know where we could find a man with hair on his head and minus a beard," he sighed.

"Surely there must be such a one on some of the other planets!" cried the princess, springing to her feet and pacing up and down, her violet eyes on the pink sands, her marine-blue tresses falling about her golden shoulders.

"But we have no means of importing another planet inhabitant," argued Wistus, now shifting uneasily from one foot to the other, like a chicken on a hot griddle.

"The wisest man in the domain of King Doolittle should be able to devise a means," responded Glorious. "Surely, with all your knowledge, you could find some way to do me such a little favor."

"I fear what you ask is quite impossible, your highness. Did you but ask anything else, I would readily accomplish it; but to bring a representative from an unexplored planet—that were an impossibility. Would your highness be satisfied if Prince Hubbub were to shave his beard and place the hair on top of his head?"

"Never!" answered the princess, stamping her foot. "I abhor false hair. Who ever heard of such a thing? The suggestion is an insult. I am deeply offended with you, Wistus, and unless you can produce a man smooth of chin, who is not a baldhead, you may prepare yourself for the sacrifice."

"The sacrifice of what, your highness?" cried the prophet apprehensively.

"The sacrifice of your wisdom tooth and your position," she replied, and straightway took herself off to the castle, to have her supper, consisting of the extracts of fruits and flowers, blown into her mouth with an atomizer by her lady in waiting.

In Venus, be it known, ladies of all classes never dined in public.

CHAPTER II.

A VOICE FROM ABOVE.

The princess' declaration left the aged Wistus considerably perturbed. He began to wish his wisdom tooth were the fraction of an inch smaller than that of some other gentlemen of the domain. After all, it wasn't such an easy job, being "wise man" at King Doolittle's court.

He flopped himself down on the seat vacated by the royal one, and wept in his despair, for he realized how utterly impossible it was to invite a gentleman with a smooth chin, and hair on his head, to visit Venus.

Indeed, it was quite as improbable that he could secure the services of any kind of a man from another planet. Why had he written that fatal article?

"Alas, our crimes find us out!" he moaned.

"Why do you talk to yourself?" asked some one at his elbow.

Wistus started to his feet, and beheld Prince Hubbub. The prince was doubtless a very handsome man, looked at from the Venus point of view. His head was beyond the reach of the most potent hair tonic, and glistened in the rays of the moon, peeping over the courtyard fence.

His mustache was green, divided horizontally, half twisted upward, half the other way. His beard looked like a floor mop. An application of metal polish might have helped his complexion—rather inclined to a rusty hue.

Wistus sighed deeply before replying, then he said:

"Alas, Prince Hubbub, I am in the shoes of a murderer. I have been condemned to die."

"To die? Surely not so bad as that?"

"Worse; I am threatened with a visit to the dentist if I cannot perform a feat which no living soul would undertake with hope of success."

"Tell me your troubles!" commanded the prince.

Wistus, with the utmost delicacy, unburdened himself, trying to cover the reason of the princess for wishing an outsider. But Hubbub saw through, over, and under the bush Wistus was beating about, and he drew his side arms.

These side arms consisted of three thongs about four feet long. To the end of each thong was attached a ball of thorns. The whole made a very effective instrument of pain infliction.

For his confession Wistus now received a couple of dozen blows over the head and shoulders from the prince's sidearms, the sensation being so poignant that the old gentleman was forced to cry out with considerable animation.

When his hand grew tired, Hubbub said something about the wise man being a little bit wiser than when he began to lie about the princess, and strode off to see that young lady's father regarding her dowry.

Again the philosopher was left alone, but he could no longer sit comfortably; so he walked about, hugging his wounded anatomy and yelling right lustily.

But all the good folk of the community had gone to bed, and those at the castle were too far removed, so no one paid attention to his swan song, until there came a voice which drowned out that of the man with the outraged feelings.

"Let up bawling down there, and put me wise to a landing place!" it shouted.

Wistus sat plump down on the sand at this and stared up at the heavens. What he saw made him forget even his rough treatment.

Something that resembled a huge bat, with yellow eyes of fire and wings twenty feet in length, was gliding over the courtyard, descending groundward as though walking down a spiral stairway from the skies.

Wistus had never seen a bat quite so large, even after the nights of greatest hilarity at the castle, nor in his wildest flights of imagination had he ever pictured a bird of the air that could talk with the voice of a human being. So he simply and limply sat and stared in open-eyed, open-mouthed astonishment, and listened to this:

"Watch out, or you'll get that anchor in the solar plexus! Ah! What did I tell you? Now, will you take notice when I give you the high sign? Sorry to bowl you over so abruptly and unceremoniously, but—— Hello! The old chap's knocked out!"

The part of the bat-bird that was talking hopped out of the body of the huge insect, and examined the much misused philosopher.

CHAPTER III.

THE VERY MAN.

When Wistus opened his eyes, the moon was directly overhead, taking in the proceedings with a face full of merriment.

"The thing" that had come down on the back of the bat sat on Princess Glorious' bench, and seemed to enjoy an unusual and startling occupation; that of blowing large volumes of smoke out of its nose and mouth.

"How do you feel now, pop?" asked the stranger.

Wistus thought he understood, and rubbed his chest, after taking a long breath to assure himself that his lungs had not been completely put out of commission. From there his hands roamed to his stomach, and he made a wry face.

The curious arrival immediately extracted an object from his clothing; a transparent receptacle, through the sides of which Wistus could see a beautiful red fluid. This receptacle was

handed him, and he drank; at first tentatively; at last greedily.

"I think you'll feel better now, old top—considerably better. Believe me, you're the first man I ever saw who could get on the outside of a pint *straight!* That's some feat, and one I shan't fail to mention in my memoirs. But tell me, what's the handle to this joint?"

"I don't quite understand," replied Wistus.

"Why, the alias, cognomen, or title of this place," explained the one who appeared to be on fire.

"You are in the courtyard of King Doolittle," replied Wistus.

"Never heard of him. What's his beat?"

"His beat?"

"Yes, his hangout. What particular part of the globe does he monopolize?"

"He rules the kingdom of Doolittle, situate in the northern hemidisc of Venus."

"Hemidisc of what?"

"Venus."

"Do you mean to say this is part of the planet Venus?"

"Exactly—the northern part."

The stranger whistled, and Wistus hushed him.

"Don't do that, or you will have all the servants up. Let us talk together a while. Where are you from?"

"Earth."

"Where might that be?"

"See that speck of light, about a million miles from the moon, the one southeast by west of the trinity of satellites? Well, that's Earth—to the best of my recollection. But, to tell the truth, I think I lost my way, and Earth may be any one of those three billions of flickers up there in the blue. But you're dead sure this is Venus?"

"Absolutely."

"Where did you learn the English language?"

"Our ancestors wrote it."

"Oh, I see. Then the English language was first invented on Venus?"

"No—that was on Jupiter. But Jupiter got too hot for some of the inhabitants, and they emigrated here."

"How did they encompass such space?"

"In my oldest records, brought over from Jupiter, some mention is made of ships that travel on air, but that means of navigation appears to have gone out of vogue shortly after the emigrant got safely on to Venus. Have you found the process? Is that how you got here?"

"I got here by an invention all my own. My name is Jim Oakley, but I guess one name is enough up here; so call me just Jim."

"Just Jim. Very well. My name is Wistus. And now you had better come with me to my home, for you look tired and in need of sleep. We shall have much to talk about when you are refreshed."

"Thanks in advance, Wist. But, say, if you hadn't let out those yells of yours I would have sailed right on by. Good thing you bellowed. Were you singing?"

"No, I was not singing," answered the old man grimly; and then, as an idea recurred, clapped his hands on top of his head, one after the other, and exclaimed: "You're the very man—the very man the princess wants to meet!"

CHAPTER IV.

PRESENTED AT COURT.

The first words to Wistus from Jim Oakley's lips the following morning were:

"Who is the princess?"

"She is the daughter of King Doolittle," answered Wistus.

"Why does she want to see me?"

"Because you have hair on your head and your chin is bare. You are a very lucky man."

The American roared.

"Do you mean to say that the young lady would be satisfied with a man just because his chin and his head—— Oh! that's too good. I wish I could get that to the Associated Press. She must be easy."

"Easy? You will not think so when you know her. If you had not ar-

rived I would have lost my wisdom tooth." The last sentence was uttered in a voice strained and low.

"Not really? Well, well, think of that! Why, I lost mine years ago. Had it filled with gold, but wisdom and the precious metal wouldn't mix, so I had to have it out, to keep peace under my roof. But why were you to lose a tooth, and what if you were?"

Wistus told his story, adding a few remarks about Prince Hubbub not altogether complimentary.

And while he talked he seated Jim for breakfast. There was no table, however, and the visitor was somewhat mystified. But he was not kept long in ignorance of the custom.

Wistus opened a small cupboard, from the back of which extended four tubes. Depending from the end of each tube was a good-sized shallow bowl.

"Eat!" commanded Wistus.

"Eat what?" asked Jim.

The old man turned a spigot, and from the first tube a pinkish fluid trickled into the bowl.

"Juice of the cillo," explained the host. "Very appetizing."

The guest swallowed the cillo with evidences of appreciation.

Then followed a compound of grasses and milk from tube number two. This likewise did he find palatable. Tube number three gave forth a steaming offering, which the American made quick work of; after which he quaffed a sort of coffee from the bowl depending from tube four, and expressed himself as being much refreshed.

"Where does the junk come from?" he asked, picking up a napkin that Wistus offered.

"From the castle. I am a court attaché, and am fed from the royal pantries," said Wistus.

"Now, if you are ready," he continued nervously, "we will go and see the princess. But whatever you do, don't call me a liar in her presence. Your opportune appearance will make me prime minister, and I will not forget you."

"His kindness is only exceeded by the shine of his bald pate," thought Jim, as he walked beside the wise man to the castle doorstep.

The Princess Glorious had spent a somewhat restless night, dreaming dreams of flying through space astride a huge bird, visiting other worlds and seeing odd sights and strange people, till she had a troublesome headache.

When Wistus appeared, therefore, she was not in the best of temper.

"What is it?" she demanded.

"I bear wondrous tidings, your highness."

"Let me have them as quickly as possible. I feel indisposed."

She curled her little feet under her and snuggled into a collection of riotous-colored pillows. Her marine-blue curls flowed all over the divan. Evidently hairpins had not yet "come in" on Venus.

"Yesterday your highness was good enough to give me a commission to fulfill," began Wistus. "Your imagination had been fired by my article on the inhabitants of sister planets, and you expressed a desire to meet and converse with a representative of the masculine gender from one of these other worlds."

"Yes," drawled the princess, stretching her arms and legs like a waking cat; "yes, I said all those things yesterday evening, but last night I had terrible dreams about your other worlds, where the people were hideous in color and shape, and I have changed my mind."

"But, your highness!" exclaimed the philosopher, tugging frantically at his beard. "But, your highness, I went immediately to do your bidding. I invented, on the spot, a means of communication with Earth——"

"Earth?"

"Yes, that's the name of the planet I selected. I communicated with the king of that world, and he was greatly flattered to know that you wished to speak with one of his people, and that possibly the intermarriage of the two races could be consummated.

"He wasted no time to fulfill your highness' command," went on Wistus excitedly, "and he dispatched within the

hour his favorite subject, who arrived in the courtyard at midnight."

"It took him a long time to get here, didn't it?" said the princess; for women, even on Venus, must find a little fault, even with the most wonderful accomplishments.

"He came as quickly as his vehicle would carry him," answered Wistus, "and probably would have been here sooner, but the castle lights were not burning. I have always recommended the burning of the lights all night long in the turrets, as your highness knows. Only my prolonged vocal signaling gave him his bearings. He is now here to do your bidding."

"What does he look like?"

"His chin is as smooth as your highness', and his head is covered with beautiful dark brown hair, full of waves like our swamp moss. His height is prodigious, fully six feet—a whole foot taller than any man in our kingdom. He is really a young giant."

"And his color? Is it the same as ours?" asked the princess.

"Alas, no!" said Wistus, who had been hoping she would forget to ask that question. "Alas, no!"

"What color? Come, speak, or your tooth——"

"Forgive me, your highness, but the king of earth probably picked his messenger in a hurry, and did not take time to find one of your favorite color. The complexion of the Earth man, whose name is Just Jim, is—er—white."

"White?"

"Alas——"

"A white man, you say? Impossible! Only our baboons are white. This must be a practical joke practiced upon us by the king of Earth. If it is so, we shall be revenged. Meanwhile, this Just Jim shall be my coachman! White? How horrible!"

And the young lady with the skin of a golden sunset here punched her pillows vigorously and angrily, while Wistus stood first on one leg and then on the other, his left hand on his stomach and his right on his bald pate.

When he changed feet, he changed hands, a sign of superlative perturbation.

There was a royal silence of a long minute, broken finally and abruptly by a deep and strange voice:

"I say, pop, do you want me to sit out there in the vestibule all day? You know, I'm not used to hanging around doorsteps. I frequently am permitted to enter the drawing-rooms, if I behave and don't break any furniture."

CHAPTER V.

ODD MANNERS.

At this intrusion the princess sprang to her feet, and Wistus almost collapsed.

"Who and what is *this* that presumes to encroach on my privacy?" cried the blue-haired lady.

But the stranger heard without taking note of what she said. He stood and stared at her in a very frank manner, because he had received a severe jolt to his curiosity.

Never had he seen so unusual a young lady; her blue hair, violet eyes, and golden complexion held him glued to the spot for two whole minutes, during which Princess Glorious glared and Wistus beat himself on the back to regain his breath.

"By George!" cried the unannounced visitor, at last. "By George, she's a peach, Wist! Introduce me!"

"This," faltered the wise man, who felt his wisdom tooth throbbing like a sledge hammer, "this is Prince Just Jim, favored subject of the king of Earth, your royal highness, Princess Glorious."

It was the American's turn to show surprise, but he smothered it admirably, and suffered his distinction to sit upon his broad shoulders unmolested. He felt the occasion demanded something, however, so he dropped a courtly bow as he remembered seeing it at the theater.

His graceful bearing rather pleased the princess, and the pucker between her pretty eyes began to relax.

"It is not the custom here for visitors to enter our palace. None but the aged

attachés of the court are permitted that liberty," she said, with traces of resentment still lurking in her flutelike voice.

"Oh, that's all right," answered Just Jim; "I'll keep your secret; but it's much the same on Earth. However, if you had come all that distance to see me, I wouldn't scold you a bit for forcing your way into the house. Besides, I thought my friend Wistus had got lost about the premises, and I started out to locate him. Let's talk it over."

Princess Glorious was considerably awed by the overbearing methods of the American, and sat amid her cushions without noticing that it was the first time in her life that she had obeyed a command.

Just Jim sat himself about a foot and a half from her, piled some pillows at her back and some more under his own shoulders, and then paused a moment to stare at her in undisguised admiration.

"By Jove, you're the prettiest girl I've ever seen!" he declared finally.

Wistus started forward, as though to hush him up, for, be it known, compliments were considered more poisonous than rabbits on Venus, and were always marked with the skull and crossbones of disapproval.

But the princess had a new plaything in this white man, and she did not intend to be deprived of any of his tricks.

So she motioned Wistus to go away back and sit down, even as far as the northeast corner of the room, which was the right distance for a chaperon—just out of earshot.

He sat there on his stool, his legs in his arms, his chin on his knees, and his white beard trickling down to his shins like a miniature Niagara.

Although he could not hear that which passed between the girl and her companion, Wistus could see the effect of the conversation on the former, and it appeared very exhilarating.

He never had seen the princess in such good spirits; there was no vestige of temper now. Instead, she laughed, and clapped her hands, and winked her eyes deliciously.

The American seemed contented. The pillows slipped down behind his shoulders, he slipped down on them, and was soon reclining on most of the royal divan, feet and all, his chin between his hands; while the princess sat at the head of the couch and now and then touched his cheek with the back of her hand, or ran her fingers through the wonderful dark brown hair on the stranger's head.

It was like a first drink of champagne to the princess, and the joy of the scene bubbled and effervesced in her heart.

Wistus rubbed his wisdom tooth with cunning delight. Here, indeed, was revenge complete on the hated Prince Hubbub, who whipped defenseless old men.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HEADACHE CURE.

It was a few minutes later that a servant entered the room backward, and informed Glorious that her father wished to speak with her. She bade the maid to say she was indisposed, and would come when her headache was gone.

"Oh, have you a headache?" asked the American sympathetically.

The princess' lips parted in a ravishing smile that started two deep and tantalizing dimples into being. Just Jim was *just* Jim, after all, and the sight of those lips, as fragrant-looking as a red rose when the dew glistens on its velvety surface, was a temptation irresistible.

A terrible lie entered his brain, and he conferred upon himself the degree of M. D. on the spot.

"I have a positive cure for headache," he said, in a tone that carried conviction.

"You were, indeed, a wonderful person if this were true," she replied.

"Oh, I can do more things than that," confessed the liar. "I'm just chock-full of all kinds of accomplishments. They stick out all over me. The longer you know me the more wonderful I become in your eyes. It grows on you, like eating olives, or making love.

"Now I'll show you how to chase that headache away. I take you in my arms, like this, you see; and I place your head on my left shoulder, like that; then you turn your face so, raise the chin so, and now hold perfectly still."

The "doctor" then applied the cure, which consisted in placing his lips on those of the princess and giving her a warm, fervent kiss.

She submitted to the treatment with a tranquillity that was almost embarrassing to the administrator. He felt like kicking himself for his act; it was like kissing an angel.

Slowly he raised her and placed her where she belonged. Too much wine at one sitting is a dangerous thing, especially if it be of royal vintage.

The princess sat and stared out into the room for a moment, and seemed a trifle dazed. She brushed the curls back from her face, pressed her burning cheeks with her hands, and closed her eyes.

"I don't think my headache has *quite* vanished," she said.

Jim Oakley gasped.

But again did the servant enter backward and remind the princess that her father was waiting.

"I shall be with him immediately," she said; and in the next breath forgot his existence.

Wistus was giving further proof of his chaperoning ability by snoring musically on his perch. He was dreaming of prime-minister performances.

Glorious turned to her Earth man.

"I rejoice that I am growing to like you immensely," she said, quite frankly.

When the race abandoned Jupiter, the arts of coquetry were lost in the air.

"That's exactly what I want you to do," said Jim.

"You are so new, and novel, and nice," she said.

"And you are so saccharine and simple," he answered.

"I like your hair," was her next remark, and the American was sure he had heard those very words somewhere before.

"It's very common in my country," he replied; "but tresses such as yours were never dreamed of. And that complexion! The color of your skin!"

"Are your women not of like color?"

"Oh, we have them all shades but golden," laughed Oakley. "We have white ladies, black ladies, brown ladies, red ladies, and pink ladies. Also, we have a great many colors of hair, but no blue. You would create quite a stir if you should happen along Fifth Avenue, New York, some Sunday afternoon."

"It would be jolly to take the trip, wouldn't it?"

"Yes, quite jolly. Perhaps we can arrange it—say, a week-end some time."

She clapped her hands with pure joy. But her delight was short-lived, for her father, King Doolittle, burst into the room at that moment, followed by Prince Hubbub.

Both were so angry that they were perfectly calm and composed in manner, and the princess had misgivings.

Oakley instantly realized that the square-shaped individual, with scarlet trousers and green sash, must be the chief of the works, so he gave Glorious' hand a reassuring pressure as she rose to meet the occasion.

At sight of the white man, Prince Hubbub grasped his side arms, and stepped threateningly forward.

The princess raised her arm and motioned him back.

Wistus rolled off his stool and scrambled to his feet, every fiber in his body frozen with the chill of fear.

CHAPTER VII.

A PRIVATE CONFERENCE.

King Doolittle took some little time in getting his under jaw out of deadlock. Finally he succeeded, and spoke:

"What is the meaning of this, Glorious? Who is this person in the strange garb?"

"He is Prince Just Jim, father—a renowned doctor from Earth, who has come to treat me for my headaches."

Now, the headaches of the princess were a matter of grave concern to her father, and she could not have given a better excuse for Oakley's presence.

"So?" he replied. "And has he improved your condition?"

"Considerably," answered the princess; "but he finds my case a hard one, and it is not improbable that I shall have to take a long air voyage to recover my former health."

"So?" repeated the king. "And where does the learned doctor advise you to travel?"

"To Earth, father, where the atmosphere is very beneficial. Is it not so, prince?"

"It is," corroborated the American. "I am sure if you would take the journey it would make you a different woman."

"Hear, father, hear!"

"But where is this place?" asked the monarch.

"Earth is the greatest of all planets," answered Oakley, "and the trip would have to be made in my machine, which is hitched out there in your back yard."

"Sir," struck in Prince Hubbub, "there is no greater planet than Venus, nor a greater king than Doolittle! I am inclined to believe your story is a tissue of lies, and you are a fraud!"

"King," said the American, addressing himself to the monarch, "I would recommend that you put that man in the booby hatch, and that you and I talk the matter of your daughter's health over together.

"I can truthfully say," he continued professionally, "that, besides a headache, her heart is affected, and she should be put under my treatment without delay."

This alarmed the monarch so completely that he immediately ordered the American to follow him alone into his private conference chamber. Their withdrawal left the princess with Prince Hubbub, who told Wistus to take himself out into the front yard, and leave them to themselves.

And when the philosopher was gone, the prince began to get nasty and insulting. He accused the royal lady of all sorts of things, the chief one being that she did not love him.

To his surprise, she heartily agreed with him, and, furthermore, told him, in very blunt sentences, that she would never be his wife.

Then the prince grew cunning. He pretended to be deeply dejected, and even forced some tears from beneath his lashes. What really pained him was the possible loss of the huge piles of clay which were to come to him with the Glorious hand.

The king, of course, was the richest man in the domain, and had clay to *walk* upon. He had little mounds of it in his parlor for people to sit on, and his cellars were filled with the precious substance.

All the household utensils, such as buckets, bowls, and drinking cups, were made of pure clay, while those of the common houses were made of such ridiculously cheap materials as gold and silver.

Balls of clay from variously sized molds were used as money.

Prince Hubbub was also very rich, because he was possessed of a great amount of clay, but he wished to be a multimillionaire; hence his greed for the Doolittle dirt.

But the princess wasn't particularly fond of clay, and, although she accepted a gold match safe, a cigarette box, and some cuff links from the American, she looked upon them as the gift of a poor man, and consequently valued them highly. He had absolutely no clay, but she had an abundance, and knew they could be happy.

The prince continued his weeping until the girl's heart was touched with pity, and she tried to console him by braiding his beard.

That is exactly what the villain wanted, for while she was thus engaged he leaned over and blew the fumes of a powder into her ear. The effect of the powder was to render her unconscious before she could whistle for help.

Then Prince Hubbub got busy. He bundled her up and hurried with her out the back way of the palace.

Whistling for his bodyguard, who were waiting for him, mounted on fleet-footed animals that resembled zebras, he placed her on his own charger, and rode away, followed by his servants.

They rode like the wind, and in two hours had covered as much as three hundred miles. In fact, the prince and his captive were safely ensconced in the castle of his province before King Doolittle and the American awoke to their absence.

Then there was the very dickens to pay. The king grew so calm that he actually smiled, which meant that he would leave no stone unturned to be revenged on the prince.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEW TACTICS.

Jim Oakley acted differently. He said some things in a loud voice, that were not in the Venus editions of the English dictionaries, and rushed to his airship, where he played tunes on the strings with hammers, screw drivers, and monkey wrenches.

Wistus was also on hand, ready to help, and while King Doolittle was calling his army together, the American was questioning the philosopher.

"Do you know where he took her?"

"They must have gone to Prince Hubbub's province, to the south."

"Well, it's up to you to pilot me there. You are responsible for her captivity. You should never have left her alone, except when I was with her. Here, get in, and see that you hold tight, for I'm going to give you a ride compared with which 'dipping the dips' is like sleeping in a cradle. Watch out, and keep that beard of yours out of my eyes!"

Just then the king came dashing up at the head of his army of mounted soldiers, all armed with peculiar-looking weapons. Jim felt the automatic pistol in his pocket, and smiled grimly.

"Follow us!" yelled the king, galloping on.

"No; you follow *me!*" shouted the American, rising into the air and shooting over the heads of the mounted guard.

His appearance almost caused a stampede, but he soon left the king and the army far behind.

They passed acres of flower gardens and countless canals, pastures where strange beasts were grazing, and lakes covered with water fowl; and the only audible sounds were the throbbing of the motor and the thumping of Wistus' heart.

The prophet kept his finger pointed straight ahead, and Oakley used that as his compass.

Finally they came in view of the settlements and the palace of Prince Hubbub. The place was alive with people, for the prince realized that the king would fight, and was prepared.

But Oakley took no notice of the army, which was so surprised at his arrival that it forgot to do its duty, and he landed in the courtyard before they could stop him.

However, when he jumped from his machine and started for the steps they began to swarm around.

Prince Hubbub came to the door, and stood on the top step.

Oakley paused at the bottom, and drew his revolver. Here he could make his demands and guard his machine as well.

"Bring the Princess Glorious out immediately, or I'll fill you full of holes!" he shouted, in a voice that fairly shook the place.

"You shall never have her!" answered the price. "And, furthermore, if you don't go back to Earth, where you belong, I'll have you buried alive."

For reply, Oakley raised his gun and fired.

The flame appeared to the startled natives to shoot out of his very finger tips, and they whistled in panic as they saw the prince totter and come tumbling down the stairway.

The American grabbed him by the throat as he tried to rise.

"The next shot will end your life," he cried. "Order the lady brought out instantly!"

Now, the prince had been pinked in the leg, and the sting wasn't very agreeable. The blood was flowing, and the wound looked very ugly. Also, he was quite convinced that this white-faced stranger was some sort of devil, and would do as he said. So he gave instructions for the release of Glorious.

She came rushing out, and threw her arms about Just Jim's neck in quite the approved Earthly fashion.

He led her to his airship and helped her in beside Wistus, who had been too frightened to alight.

At that moment the king reached the outskirts of the town, and the battle was on.

In their haste to get back to the domain of Doolittle, the happy pair forgot to tell the king of the rescue, and as they soared away into the skies the battle of thorn balls raged fiercely.

Naturally Princess Glorious was very grateful to Just Jim, and tried to show her appreciation by having the worst headache of her career. And the American never doctored a headache so skillfully.

The way they disregarded the presence of their chaperon was refreshing to behold. They paid about as much attention to him as to the bursted barometer attached to an upright of the machine.

Nor did they give the airship any considerable attention. Fortunately it was as well regulated, balanced, and trained as a buggy horse, and Oakley had not the slightest trouble in guiding it with his left hand.

CHAPTER IX.

FIREWORKS.

The trio reached the court of King Doolittle without mishap, and the natives turned out en masse to welcome their safe return.

Extensive preparations were started, properly to celebrate both the heroic rescue of Glorious by the white stranger and the probable victory of the king over his unruly subject.

But the hilarity was short-lived. The king came back, but not as a victor, with brow bared for the laurel wreath. Instead, he returned twenty miles ahead of his army, which retreated as rapidly as it could, under the stinging lashes of Prince Hubbub's followers.

The whole country was soon in a pretty uproar. The prince was out for revenge. The people had long been oppressed by King Doolittle, and this excuse for his extermination was seized with an alacrity not at all complimentary to the monarch's popularity.

Consequently he was much perturbed. He rushed into his courtyard, and appealed to Oakley:

"You got us into this trouble, and it looks now as if you must get us out, or be sent into oblivion. Why did you come here, anyway?"

"Calm yourself, old man," laughed the American. "That's no way for a king to act. Why, you remind me of the monarchs in comic operas. Look at your legs! They are shaking like aspen leaves; and your crown, old top, is hanging over your ear! I'm ashamed of you—really, I am. I couldn't be proud of you as a father-in-law; you'll have to brace up if you want me to take you back to Earth with us."

"Earth! Would that I were there!" cried the monarch. "Prince Hubbub is a demon when he is crossed. I should never have excited him. Ah, look at that! A message from him!"

Over the wall of the courtyard shot a thorn ball to which was tied something which resembled half a brick. Close inspection disclosed a threat to the effect that Glorious must be forthcoming, or the king's palace would be destroyed and the monarch and his white visitor killed.

"If he hadn't mentioned me, I'd have felt slighted!" exclaimed Oakley, when the "letter" was read.

And then, as an idea struck him: "Call forth the royal stenographer, or stone engraver, and send that bald-headed tin soldier an answer from me. Tell him that after supper I'll come out and whip his entire army if they don't keep off the Doolittle grass."

When it grew dark, Oakley tuned up his machine, and called to Glorious:

"Come and watch the fireworks."

She ran to him, and he lifted her into the aëroplane. A chuckle was on his lips as he took his place beside her.

They soared into the air, and the aviator switched on the searchlight, which revealed several thousands of Prince Hubbub's followers, scattered in front of the castle.

A shrill whistling broke the silence, and the excitement began.

"Now you will help me fight," said Oakley to Glorious, handing her a roman candle and taking one himself from a box under the seat. "Don't be frightened. Just blaze away at the little shrimps, and if you see the prince, try to bounce a fire ball on his bald coco!"

He lighted the roman candles, and they began to sputter.

Glorious gave a cry of alarm as the fizzing sparks blazed and sputtered, but Oakley held her hand and showed her how to manipulate the harmless toy.

Then began the bombardment of the army. Oakley lighted half a dozen roman candles, and their balls of flame, darting down among the enemy, soon had that body of natives in a state of collapse.

Never had they seen such a display, and as soon as they could close their mouths and command their legs they scurried in all directions.

To add to their terror, Oakley set off several skyrockets, and the prince's followers thought their day had come.

This sensational victory is printed in heavy-faced type in the history of Doolittle's kingdom.

But that night also recorded a sad occurrence: The complete disappearance of Just Jim and the Golden Glorious. They went up into the heavens, as though in pursuit of a flaming skyrocket, and did not return.

On the planet Venus it was thought for a long time that the pair had merely eloped, and would come back; but as the months went by, and no word was received, hope of their return was gradually abandoned. They were mourned as dead.

But behold!

The first advices received over the Interplanetary Wireless Line, an invention which startled the worlds of the Universe, making intercourse between planets a possibility, recorded the alliance of Venus and Earth through the marriage of Glorious Doolittle, the golden-skinned princess, to James Oakley, intrepid explorer, discoverer, and all-around national hero.

The details that reached the court of King Doolittle were scant, but it was intimated that the presence of a native of Venus on Earth had served to arouse the people of that planet to the wildest enthusiasm.

All the kings of all the countries were present at the marriage, and the majority of the Earth women—so ran the message to Venus—were striving to change their white complexions to golden ones, as well as to find a dye that would match the Glorious blue hair.

Character Denoted by Laughter

A SPECIALIST on the throat and voice has discovered that every man unconsciously betrays his character when he laughs.

So does every woman. Therefore, to study your sweetheart's silvery laugh is to probe her secret mind.

This learned specialist announces that each person laughs in one of the vowel sounds.

The man who laughs in "A," who emits a hearty "Ha-ha!" is frank, loyal, and loves noise and movement.

Those who laugh in "E" are phlegmatic, some of them even melancholy. Their forced "He-he!" comes from no sense of amusement.

The timid, the irresolute, the naïve, and the pliable laugh in "I." So do children, says this student of laughs; and most people will agree that children and foolish young women giggle in "I."

The laugh in "O" indicates, on the one side, generosity and good companionship; on the other, boldness or brutality. Never a villain in a melo-drama but who mocked his victim with a "Ho-ho!"

Those who laugh in "U" are misanthropes, and the hateful noise they utter when they grin should warn their fellow creatures against them.

Red Wolf

By Harold De Polo

'That might is right, that the weak must yield to the strong—such is the law of life, of man and beast, in the great Northern forests. And out of that law grew all the problems of the powerful Red Wolf, 'whose streak of dog blood gave him instincts that were strangely conflicting.

(COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE)

CHAPTER I.

CUBHOOD MUSINGS.

RED WOLF'S mother was half dog. His father was all wolf, straight-backed, untouched by the hand of man.

The cub's first memory of life, of the great world, was a dark, walled cave, where he, in company with three other youngsters, snuggled against his mother's soft side and suckled the warm white fluid that was so pleasing to the palate.

Then came the day when he could see —see the dark walls that had previously *felt* dark—and see out of the mouth of the lair the whiteness and bigness of the Alaskan snows.

The world, his world, had seemed so small to him, and now, at his first glimpse outside, it seemed so large, so enormous. He tried to get to it, but with a sound cuff his mother hurled him back, and he whimpered and growled, and she struck him again. And then he learned to obey—to obey might—it was his first lesson.

Then, for days, he contented himself with frisking and rolling and playing with his little kin; tossing one another about, each trying to gain that small spot near the cave mouth where something yellow—yellow and warm and dazzling—came in from outside, and where it was so nice to lie and doze.

He was stronger than the others, larger at the shoulders, longer at the jaw, and he held the vantage point many times.

He would stretch his length and gaze blinkingly at the whiteness, at the greenness that every day became greener and freer from the transparent white that clung to it, and at that mysterious ball of fiery gold that pained one's eyes if looked at too steadily.

Something in him craved to be out and away to see what lay beyond. Once again he tried, only again to be thrust back roughly, pained and bruised.

After a month of eating and sleeping, he noticed that his father stayed away for longer intervals, and when he came back he did not bring as plentiful a supply of food as usual.

The intervals lengthened, until it was very seldom that he could feel his teeth sink into palpitating meat, and feel the warm, thick, red blood of his father's catch trickle down his throat so deliciously.

Such feasts sent a feeling through his whole young body that was glorious, but at the same time peculiar, for if set his veins and muscles twitching nervously, while something inside him cried out for he knew not what—cried out insistently.

Then came the time when his mother, too, went away on long hunts, and returned with her mate, gaunter day by day, snapping at the least thing. And seldom was food brought, and when it was he and his three brothers and sisters fought and snarled over it. He was the stronger, therefore he got more than his share.

Now, even the warm white stuff that was like blood, except that it had never sent those peculiar thrills through him,

was not to be had, for, no matter how he persisted and tried to draw it, it would never come. And when he whined pitifully, she that had formerly given it would lick him with her tongue repeatedly, and rub her nose over his body, and whine softly with mother love.

Then, one day, he noticed that there was only one other cub to play with. The other two lay still and cold, and something told him that they would never move again—something that made him shrink back into the farthest, darkest corner—something that gripped him—fear!

And quietly, one morning, his remaining brother stretched stiffly out, and moved no more. Again he shrank back, only to move forward and sniff at the rigid form.

It did not hurt him—he became easier—but still, he feared it—it was something horrible—it was the end of things—the end of seeing the whiteness that lay beyond.

He was fortunate in being alive. He had grown surprisingly, and was thin and weakened, but his tough framework and the little his parents brought him just sufficed to keep him alive.

His form was like his father's: Sturdy, high-shouldered, with long jaws, and powerful haunches. Also, he inherited the active brain. His fur at the chest was streaked with red—his mother's dog blood—in consequence of which he was to become known to men as "Red Wolf."

Now his great gray father came but little, and when he did he brought only a small bird, or squirrel, or ground mouse. His mother, also, was absent more. But he was getting used to it—used to lying dully in that yellow patch, with his insides gnawing him steadily, waiting for a mouthful. Many times he wished to sally forth, but he remembered the penalty and stayed. His aptitude to learn and remember stood him in good stead in after life.

At last, in the most severe part of the famine, his father returned no more. The cub wondered. The she wolf prowled around the cave countless times, always rumbling low in her throat, her eyes fierce, and sometimes bounding upon Red Wolf with ferocious love, and mauling him tenderly. For she knew the fate of her mate. A lynx, a man-animal, or one of the things the latter carried that spurted fire and death, had touched him. He would come no more—it was the law of the wild.

She, seeing the necessity of her one remaining cub, ran and tracked until her ribs looked like an accordion, and she was well-nigh wild with disappointment and hunger.

But with a suddenness that was delightful almost to delirium, the famine broke. The mother brought the cub food—so much food that it staggered him especially after his strenuous fasting.

Once more his teeth tasted flesh, once more his throat felt blood, warm, luxurious, and once more his veins thrummed for the want of something—something—he could not tell what, but he knew that whatever it was lay in the open—beyond.

Finally came the day he had been waiting for, waiting longingly. The day when his mother thought him of sufficient size and cleverness of brain to leave the cave and meet the world.

When he got outside, he went mad. He rolled in the cool, white covering of the ground which was so soft and pleasant. He sprang into the air, and landed without caution into the same softness. He tossed himself over and about his mother many times, uttering short, ecstatic little barks of delight. He lived!

There was room—room—limitless room. This was life! The pure air, and the white and green and blue were life—life!

He felt the blood surge through his young body with terrible force—he lived! His mother stayed near, quiet, amused, happy, watching him with tender glances.

Presently she quieted him, and became still herself. And he, curious as well as obedient, followed suit.

He saw a lively little gray thing, a

squirrel, bound from the limb of a tree, and scamper playfully across the ground. Then he saw the first kill. His mother's slim, reddish-gray form lost its rigidity, and, like a bolt of lightning, she passed through the air. A tiny squeal was heard as she pinned her prey to earth. Then she and Red Wolf partook of the gray thing.

The warmness of it, and the knowledge of the power that lay within his mother, and the thought that he, being her kind, would some time be able to do the same—kill—kill his own food—sent a new thrill through him—the lust for blood. All the wolf in him was dominant.

And then, that same day, when he himself, after several attempts, succeeded in dealing the death stroke to a small wood mouse, and had eaten it ravenously, growling out his pleasure, he came to the conclusion that the world was a most wonderful place. But at the same time, for his head was excellent and quick to see, that it was a place in which only the strong survived—a place where might, and might only, was right.

CHAPTER II.

IN THRALDOM.

For the next two months, he led a blissful existence. Roaming through the wild with his mother, learning to kill, to fight, to evade superior strength. He became very clever. His brain worked rapidly, his eye judged correctly, and every day he learned something more, and always he remembered his lesson.

He was only five months old, but his body was large, and he was dexterous in his movements—a thing seldom attained at such an early age. He came to know the wild well—know it and love it.

But one day it was all changed. He was dozing alone in his cave, waiting for his mother's return. A tall bulk shadowed the opening, and Red Wolf looked up and snarled instinctively. It was a man-animal, a dark one, an Indian—his instinct told him it was an enemy. His hair along his back rose and bristled, and he retreated, snarling still.

But the Indian only stepped closer, and struck him cruelly over the head with a club. Red Wolf, stupefied yet brave, tried to spring. Again that terrible club came down over his nose with stunning force. He shrank back, growling sullenly—he remembered that might was right. The club and its wielder were might. Then the man stooped over him, and fastened a stout leather thong around his neck, and he was ignominiously dragged from his home.

There followed many horrible days—days in which he was beaten continuously, brutally, and fed but little—being broken to the harness of the dog team. For White Elk, his master, was going on a long journey and wanted all the dogs he could get.

Red Wolf was bullied and harassed by his teammates, for they looked upon him as an alien, a wolf. But he fought back and paid them doubly, until finally, as he learned their ways and tactics, he could thrash them all with great ease. For he had the advantage of the knowledge of the wild as well as that of the camp.

They let him alone, only daring to attack him in numbers. But even then they suffered, for he had grown surprisingly. His shoulders were splendid, and, although he was but nine months old, they stood high and broad, with tough, sinewy muscles playing easily and powerfully behind them. His jaw was long, wide, with teeth and fangs that were sharp and big—the punishing jaw of his great father.

He handled himself with a superb gracefulness, muscular and clean cut. His hair was long and bushy, all gray but his red-streaked chest. He was good to look at.

But life to him was now dreadful. Beaten by his master, kept a chained captive, and fed but little. Entirely isolated from the other dogs—for they would have nothing to do with him—he became wild, vicious, striking at them when he could.

The day of the journey came. Red Wolf ran with the other dogs, doing his work well and untiringly. But how he hated them, hated them all. White Elk, the dark man-animal that was so powerful, and these dogs that ran along with him, were not his kind. He was wolf—wolf—with all of his father's fighting blood coursing through him. His mother's dog streak he had not yet felt—he was wolf.

Still, his master, through sheer cruelty, beat him unmercifully. It did no good to rebel, for might was against him. He took it out on the other dogs, slashing or ripping them whenever he could. He held himself apart, sullen, revengeful, his eye always smoldering, bitterness in his heart, morose and implacable. All looked upon him as a hopeless case—bad and untamable.

He grew used to harness, to the long trips, to the fearful poundings, to the hate of the others—he took it all as a matter of course—the law of life. He would have liked to kill White Elk, but the Indian was careful and always carried a club, and kept him chained securely.

And so Red Wolf only waited, while every day he became stronger and larger and more mighty. He was known all along the Mackenzie as White Elk's terrible fighting wolf-dog. He had been in many battles, and was much scarred, but had never yet been beaten. And with all the prestige he brought the Indian, and all the good service he did him, he got only clubbings.

The man seemed to take a fiendish pleasure in flogging him. White Elk was one of that despicable breed that, because they cannot command and bully men, take it out on their dogs, beating them as they would like to beat men.

So Red Wolf grew to hate the world. He became soured and bad-tempered, all the wolf in him to the front, hating men and dogs with a burning hatred—and crying within him for the wild.

Then came another turning point in his life. A white man, Streeter by name, took a liking to him, and paid a fabulous price to White Elk for him—as prices ran then.

This Streeter *was* a man. Tall and well built, with a long face, clean shaven, a determined jaw, firm lips, and a pair of gray eyes that could be as cold and hard as steel. One look from them would quiet any dog—and most men. Also, there was another light in them—a kind light—a light that could bring the best forward in man or beast.

He was a good "musher," as good as any in Alaska, and could handle the worst string of dogs with the greatest ease. For his methods were white—white and straight from the shoulder—a *man's* methods.

He walked calmly up to Red Wolf, chained and sullen, to take possession.

Red Wolf, who generally got a thrashing at this point, shrank back, snarling, at bay.

Then the man looked at him—with the kind light—and held out his hands, palms upward, and sort of smiled.

"I ain't a-goin' tu hurt y'u, Red Wolf," he said quietly.

Red Wolf growled, and his hair rose.

Streeter looked angrily at White Elk, who stood by, smiling malignantly, but when he met the white man's eyes he stepped back, silent.

Again the calm voice spoke: "Red Wolf, I said I wa'n't a-goin' tu hurt y'u!"

The eyes and voice impressed Red Wolf; he noticed that the man was white, different from the Indian, and that he carried no club. Still, he growled, though less wickedly.

Once more the man spoke, firmly and ever so clearly, and his eyes hardened, and seemed to pin Red Wolf to earth. "Boy, I *tol'* y'u I wa'n't a-goin' tu hurt y'u!"

Red Wolf's growl changed to a small rumble way down in his belly. He looked at the man long and steadily. The form and face were inscrutable, the eyes commanding, indomitable—of a born master of dogs.

Then suddenly, through his blood, through his every vein, there rushed a feeling that he could not ward off. It entered his brain, and stayed there fix-

edly—the dog in him came to the front, thrusting the wolf far away and behind—and he knew that here was a man whom he must obey, who was his master—the feeling of the born dog!

Something told him that now he would receive fair treatment—he would not be beaten unjustly. His growling ceased, his bristling hair settled down, and he allowed the man to untie him, speaking soft words now, and to lead him off.

"Hum—hum! Bad dog! Bad dog! Glad I sell!" White Elk flung after them.

Streeter turned sharply, his eyes steely. "Y'u dirty swine!" he cried; "y'u've licked him fer nothin'. If I'd 'a' caught y'u, I'd 'a' licked *you.*" And they went off, while Red Wolf, doglike, felt confidence in the man that uttered these words.

CHAPTER III.

CHANGING FORTUNES.

A new world opened to him. A world in which there was kindness, much food, and love. At first he could not understand it. It was beyond him. But after several weeks, it was borne in upon him that it was true—that there were different kinds of man-animals. If he worked diligently, respected and obeyed his master, he found that all was well.

After several months, Streeter chose him for leader of the team, and naturally brought down upon him the envy and dislike of the other dogs. He ran before the string of them, swiftly and indefatigably.

It savored of retreat, but if he turned to bite, he was met with a light, stinging flick of that lash that Streeter handled with such a dexterous hand. And so he went calmly on, taking no notice of the snapping dogs behind.

Occasionally, at halts or in the nighttime, it was necessary to defend himself with tooth and fang. That was when his master was not looking—for Streeter would have no fighting among his dogs. But the others quickly learned their lesson. His prowess was exceptional, for he had the great advantage of knowing the wild, and, even if several came at him at once, he was able to slash before they realized that he was aware of their presence.

Once Streeter saw several of them attack him at the same time, and he thrashed them soundly—whereupon Red Wolf was indeed surprised, for he had never even dreamed of such justice.

He was left unchained, night and day, but he never thought of running away—the wolf in him was for the present dead. He loved his master; loved him with the whole grateful heart of a dog, proud of every bit of attention he received.

It always made him happy when his master stooped to pat his head, or speak soft words to him, or run his fingers along his ribs and toss him over on his back, and roll him about playfully. But his greatest delight was when, in the warm glow of the firelight under the pale Alaskan moon, he could stretch down by his master's side and snuggle his head up under his arm, and have it stroked gently, and hear kind, affectionate words whispered in his ear. To Red Wolf this was the greatest bliss attainable.

And so he became a model team dog, working for all that was in him, devoted to his master, and doing much to keep the other dogs in shape. He thrashed them when a run was over, if they had disobeyed during it.

One night came yet another turning point in his life. He had strayed from camp on one of his solitary prowls into the big spruce forest. He was attacked by a lone and hungry wolf, much inferior in size to him.

The battle was of short duration. Red Wolf had fought with some of the worst dogs in Alaska, and, after the wolf had inflicted two barely noticeable nips, Red Wolf's long, punishing jaws closed over the throat. Deep and deeper went his fangs—and finally the jugular vein was severed. Then he tasted the hot rush of blood from his opponent's throat.

It was glorious, delicious. It sent a thrill through him—a thrill that he re-

membered to have felt before—a peculiar thrill, that awoke the wolf in him. He stood undecided a moment—the wolf in him and the dog in him grappling with each other, fighting for the top.

He thought of Streeter—of his hands—his voice—his eyes—his whole face and bearing—and the dog won. And slowly, with the slightest trace of reluctance in his gait, he trotted back to camp.

From that time on there was always a feeling of unrest in Red Wolf. He always yearned for something. His former life in the wild with his mother came back to him clearly. He remembered tracking game—his fights—his kills—the free life of the open, with nothing to worry him but his food, which was, in fact, not a worry, but a pleasure.

He still loved his master with the same big love, but yet he was not satisfied—he wanted something more. The wild! The natural life of a wolf! His wolf blood was overpowering the opposing element!

At night, for hours, he would lie down, quiet and stony, and long with all his heart for the life that was his due.

But it was hard to forget Streeter—the man he loved and the man that loved him. Great battles took place within his mind, the two different streaks struggling for mastery. One starry night it was settled. His master was asleep, and he sniffed a wolf, one of his own kind, lurking near by.

He went to meet it. It was a she wolf, and when she saw him she whined low and caressingly. His fine form stood straight. She came nearer. Then she retreated a bit, and unconsciously he followed. She retreated farther. And then, with a wild, mad rush, his wolf blood got the better of him—he forgot Streeter — everything — everything but the call of kind—and with a gigantic leap he galloped off with her into the woods.

For half a mile they ran together, Red Wolf rubbing his head against her, happy, free—a wolf. Presently they came up with the pack to which she belonged, only some half score in number. When their leader, and that leader's rival, both aspirants to the affection of the she wolf, saw her returning with Red Wolf, they both snarled and growled wickedly.

Red Wolf stood still; the hair around his neck rose straight up; his chest went high, and he bared his teeth and fangs, and snarled back his defiance.

Then the leader, a great scarred beast, launched forth at him. Red Wolf knew men and dogs and wolves, he had fought much, and had his father's death grip. He shot upward and met the other, and with a quickness that was terrible and uncanny his fangs closed on the old leader's throat.

Together they fell to the ground. They rolled wildly about. The leader was fighting desperately. Again, as in Red Wolf's first battle with a wolf, the fight was short. Those killing teeth severed the jugular vein, and Red Wolf shook himself free, and stood bloody and ferocious, waiting for the next.

The she wolf looked on with vast approbation. This spurred her other suitor to the battle. He, also, launched himself at the intruder. But Red Wolf was phenomenal; he was far larger than any animal in the pack, and far heavier and quicker. And the new assailant went to his death from that same deadly grip.

Again Red Wolf eyed the pack. They remained quite still. This thing before them was a leader—it would be well to obey him.

And so Red Wolf, all the blood of his wild ancestors singing through his veins, led the pack off by the side of the she wolf. It came naturally to him, and he seemed as if all his life he had lived in the wild with his kind.

From that night, Red Wolf led the pack, running with his mate, Light Gray. He led them successfully, hunting down game with an indomitable persistence, and governing his subjects with an iron will. He became known all over, to wolves and men, as a fighter that could not be mastered, a wolf that never missed its prey.

Then came the time when Light Gray looked for shelter. They took refuge in a cave, and one day, on returning from the hunt, Red Wolf was presented with six soft, furry little things.

They were his mate's and his; therefore he loved them. He hunted and tracked, his mate lying at home, for many hours, bringing back with him the choicest and daintiest morsels. Together, Red Wolf and Light Gray brought up the cubs, teaching them the law of life, working for them, until finally the three that lived through their precarious young days were old enough to go and fend for themselves.

Red Wolf and his mate collected another pack, for the leadership of which it was necessary for Red Wolf to prove his right with tooth and fang.

With this pack, as with the last, he tracked and roamed, killing much food, and becoming so daring that he would often forage in a camp where man-animals dwelled that had guns that killed at a distance.

On one of these raids he met with his first great sorrow—Light Gray, his mate, was killed by a bullet through the brain.

He remembered her long, and wished for her. But he was strong, and conquered his feelings as best he could. From her death he learned a lesson, a lesson that he strictly adhered to—never to show oneself to a man-animal that had a thing that spurted flame and sure death.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STRONGER BLOOD.

Still, he led his pack, bravely and kingly, never showing himself before man. He had many severe battles, always coming off victorious. His fame spread far and wide, and he was sometimes called The Invisible Leader, and many a man swore that he would have his hide, for the number of dogs he killed was stupendous.

He had become a very marvel of his species, largest of the largest. Now he thought less of his lost mate, and gloried in the very joy of life, in his power, and strength; in his almost abnormal prowess in killing game, in quenching life, and eating warm flesh and drinking warm blood—his dog streak was forgotten.

One famine season, when the wolf pack was gaunt and hungry, they picked up the scent of a man-animal. Red Wolf, craving for food, bade them follow it.

The man traveled with six dogs, and the first night, as he slept unsuspecting, four of them were captured and eaten by the hungry wolves.

The noise awoke him, and, quickly grabbing his gun, he shot many times into their midst. His aim was a fatal one, and seven of the wolves were killed, reducing the pack to twelve.

The carcasses of their dead companions served to appease, for the moment, their lust for blood; but this was nothing to appease their terrible hunger, and still they followed.

The moment shooting began, Red Wolf got away—he remembered his lesson. His nose conveyed something to him that stirred him strangely—the smell of the man was not new to him—many things rushed back to him—it was Streeter, his former master.

Slowly his dog life came back to him. He thought of Streeter, the man who had treated him honestly. He thought that he was now tracking—thirsting for his blood; that it was this right—to kill the man who had been kind to him?

But his belly was hollow, hunger gnawed his vitals, and the wolf blood thrust these thoughts away. The man was game—food—something that would fill his aching stomach. It was the law—the law of the wild and the law of life.

And so they followed the man, Red Wolf always keeping out of sight, his brain sometimes whirling madly with various thoughts—but he was a wolf—he wanted food.

Streeter shot the pack down to six—but his ammunition gave out. He had but two dogs left. That night, when he made camp and lighted his big fire, his pursuers crept closer; they knew he had no more bullets.

Only Red Wolf kept away. In his heart was going on a great struggle. He remembered his life with him—his fair treatment—his love. But the pain in his belly was severe. Even the wolves the man had killed had counted for nothing. The whole pack were craving food.

Hunger made them brave. They formed a circle around the man, closing in nearer, little by little. Only their leader stayed behind.

Streeter was desperate. To save himself, he threw them one of his two remaining dogs, and with snapping and snarling they gobbled it up.

Red Wolf, back in the darkness, away from the fire's light, was still thinking—wolf and dog blood fighting.

The pack again closed in, this time coming to the fire's edge, snapping savagely. And Streeter tossed them his last dog. It was devoured immediately. Then, to ward them off, he threw his things at them, to gain time—time—why, he knew not, for he was cornered for good, and they would never leave him—but life is precious—every extra second of it—especially to man.

The hungry jaws snapped at him. Now he stood in the middle of his fire, in a space he had cleared away. With his mitten-protected hands, he was hurling burning brands at them. Almost all his fire was gone. Soon he would have no more brands to throw.

Red Wolf was still thinking, his brain a raging vortex—Streeter—his kind master—but his belly—his pain—which—which? And so the two different elements in him battled on.

Streeter now clasped his gun. The wolves were close. He was kicking the fire at them with his feet. There was little of it left. Hardly any! A wolf clawed his boot. He batted it on the head with his gun stock. Another sprang for him—and missed.

And then, out of the blackness, Red Wolf bounded forward. His stomach could stand it no longer—he was well-nigh crazed—the wolf dominant.

He came for the man. Streeter started back. "Red Wolf!" he cried, surprised and loud. "Red Wolf!"

Then a transformation took place. Red Wolf came to earth short of his mark. The others drew back a bit, watching their leader.

Through Red Wolf's whole body the old feeling came. So quick that it took barely a second. Here before him was his old master—the man that had treated him kindly—that had fed him and loved him—the man that commanded all dogs—whose word was law—whom all obeyed.

That voice—it had brought it all back clearer than any thinking could. Now he was not a wolf—he was a dog—this was his master before him!

Again the voice sounded, with the old note in it, sharp and commanding: "Red Wolf! Down, boy, down! Red Wolf!"

And Red Wolf, head bent low, tail between his legs, crept forward like a sinner.

At the same time the rest of the pack, able no longer to await their leader's command, came nearer to their prey.

One of them sprang at him. The man met him with his boot. The animal slashed it, and ripped open his calf. Another sprang, and Streeter went down.

And then, like some mighty death-dealing machine, Red Wolf got to work. His master was being attacked—attacked by wolves—his master—he was his dog—a good dog must defend his master.

All his fighting blood of both sides sprang up. Like a streak of lightning, he had the wolf that had knocked down Streeter by the throat.

One terrible crunch of the jaws, and he tossed the brute aside, limp—dead. So he served another that jumped for the man on the ground. The others wavered. He fell into their midst, snapping, clawing, growling, wreaking devastation—and then, thoroughly beaten and frightened, they fled off into the night.

Red Wolf, proud of his work, walked slowly over to his master—all his wolf forgotten. It seemed but yesterday that he had hauled Streeter over the snows.

—he was now a dog—every inch of him.

Streeter spoke, in the tone he had formerly used when Red Wolf had made a good run: "Well—well! Ole Red Wolf!"

The man's hand stroked his head, long and gently, and the voice crooned, many times, like the soft whispering of the trees in a very slight wind:

"Red Wolf—Gawd bless y'u, boy; Gawd bless y'u! Red Wolf—ole Red Wolf!"

And Red Wolf, in the old familiar way, snuggled his head up under his master's arm.

Kiel's Room

By Gilmore Iden

An episode that called forth the finer side of college and fraternity life

THIS is Kiel's room. Do you not think it is planned well? It is the best in the whole house and characteristic of the man it commemorates.

These dark carpets, soft and thick enough to deaden all sound, the polished mahogany, and the stacks of mellow books are just as he would have had them.

And this window, opening like a French casement, gives upon a beautiful scene. You can feel the wet breeze from the river, and should you grow tired of that, you may turn around, and there are the woods and birds and flowers. Here you can be away from the busy world, and yet within a second's call.

His picture we have hung over here so that it, too, may look through the window and enjoy the scene without as well as within. Here the light brightens it up the more. See the softness of his brown hair, brushed back from his high forehead.

The eyes were blue and kind, set far from one another, and the strength of his features was accentuated by the square chin.

However, if you will but notice the mouth, you can see why it was he was unassuming. The thin lips were delicate and shy like a woman's.

How long has it been? It was before I went over to the law school—now three years. In that time the spirit of one man has dominated this fraternity, and that one man has not been in its midst.

Wonderful, but I call it justice. Justice that was long delayed, and justice in the doing of which we feel the richer.

All of us felt that Kiel was different, in that now and then something would come to the surface in his character that no one had ever suspected, and that thing was always good.

The year that marked the beginning was when the chapter first adopted the "big-brother" system. Our dormitories were crowded then, and it was necessary for every man to share his room with another.

Kiel proposed that each old man should select one younger and less experienced, exercise a personal and brotherly influence over him and be directly responsible for his conduct.

It was a new proposition to us, and the matter hung fire for some time before it was effected. There was no one to make the selection and say who were the more responsible, and therefore worthy of taking charge of the others.

"Sallie" Little took the initiative, and said he would like to room with Kiel; he recognized that he was inexperienced, and knew he could derive benefit from such an association. So at last the solution was arrived at.

I had "Bug" Holmes with me, not so much because he was new to the life,

but because he was one of the wild, dissipated men, all health and no brains.

Bug was good in his way, but he could see nothing but the obvious. He was the best athlete on the track, poor in books, and a rare fellow in society. His nickname was no reflection on his mental capacity, but, being all animal, he could take no interest in the finer exercises of the mind in which Kiel reveled.

This difference between the two men was so marked that it wrought a division in the chapter. The members sided with one or the other, and before long it was evident that the disruption could not last much longer without coming to a crisis. Remonstrances with Holmes resulted always in a wild dispute, from which I strove to withdraw.

"Why, he is a sissy," concluded Bug, one night at the end of our customary talk. "He won't take part in any of the celebrations, never attends a meeting of the Revelers, wanders off in the grove of afternoons with Aristotle or Livy, and smokes a pipe in the den in the evening. He couldn't do a manly act if you asked him."

"That is where you betray your lack of insight," I replied.

"Rot!"

"Put him to the test, and you will never find him wanting!"

"I will! What time is it—ten? I'm going to ask him to go out on the hill with me for a game and a little drink."

Holmes was determined, notwithstanding my protestations. And, much to my surprise, within a minute he returned and announced that Kiel had taken him up on the dare.

The two slipped off in the dark, leaving me to wonder why the challenge had been accepted. Surely Kiel must have had some good reason for going which I could not then comprehend.

Bug was peculiar in that it took the deed to prove the intent with him. Once I remember finding him standing in the front of a plumbing establishment with a frown on his face and scorn in his eyes. I chuckled to myself as I approached him.

"What is it, Holmes?" I asked.

He pointed to a sign in the window, which read: "Cast-iron Sinks."

"Well?" I said.

"Any fool knows that!" he replied, and became angry when I laughed heartily.

Nothing but facts meant anything to him. He was a good companion, but he did not know how to select, and precaution he had not. The leading of Kiel into a forbidden neighborhood was proof of this.

Still pondering over the situation, I was not conscious of how rapidly the time was passing until the two men burst through the door. Bug was extremely excited. His eyes were wild, hair disheveled, and perspiration was standing on his forehead. Kiel was cool and determined. Holmes broke forth in accusing tones to tell me the story.

They had started for the hill, but Kiel had noticed some policemen on the way, and reasoned that it would be folly to run into a trap.

"The cops were on their regular beat," explained Bug.

"So," interrupted Kiel, in a calm voice, "you did not notice the one behind the tree on the lawn?"

"Bah!" replied Holmes. "There was nothing in it."

At least our quiet member had thought otherwise, and he decided not to go farther. I can imagine now what a time there must have been with that high-strung disposition when Kiel was forced to bring its possessor back by bodily force.

They did not go out again that night, and Bug confided to me that his belief was confirmed and that the man was "yellow."

"No, he is cautious," I said, and turned over and tried to get some sleep, only to be awakened half an hour later to hear a tirade against cowards.

The joke was on Holmes, after all, for in the morning papers was a big account about the police raid on the house on the hill.

It was with great delight that I passed the paper to Bug at breakfast.

He threw it down immediately.

"Anyway, he is a coward!" he exclaimed, and there was nothing I could say or do to change his opinion of Kiel.

The taunts passed unnoticed, but the strangest part of the thing was that the other members began siding with Holmes. They, too, thought it was a cowardly act to run at the sight of policemen. This was the verdict of all except Sallie Little and myself.

Sallie won his way deeper and deeper into Kiel's affections. The two were inseparable.

The little difficulty into which this adventure had thrown him, and the added discredit he received from Bug, enforced a sort of separation between Kiel and his chapter.

How manfully he bore up under this hostile feeling is a thing which we all had to remember, much to our own regret for having caused it. I am afraid that even I did not recognize Kiel's full merit at the time, and I permitted Holmes to influence me unduly.

Kiel remained more away from us, and when we went into his room he did not become chummy. Sitting in his big armchair, with a book in his lap and his pipe lighted, he would blink and answer in monosyllables.

Despite the slur that was cast upon him, there were several of us who really liked the man even then. There was something so kindly and easy about his lazy, well-groomed figure.

The spring session passed, and the summer holidays slipped by. In the fall I thought all differences in the chapter would be forgotten, but Bug began again.

During that time very few of us realized what was in Kiel, his masterfulness was an attribute evinced to us only in the obvious things of the day.

You remember, of course, that we were then living in the old chapter house. It was a large and commodious structure. There was the den and lounging room in front, just off the broad hall and big stairway. Holmes and I roomed on the floor above. The dining room and kitchen were in the basement.

It was late, Thanksgiving eve. The day is vividly pictured in my mind.

Kiel had been entertaining us with his stories in the den. He always could tell us things so tenderly and true to life. The little things which any one would pass by without notice were to him momentous happenings.

Holmes was asleep in his room, so we thought.

You have doubtless heard all about the fire. The smoke penetrated the halls before we noticed it in the den. Possibly it was the story that held our attention so closely and prevented us from taking alarm.

A flare of light was sent over the transom by a blaze as some one yelled "Fire!"

We ran, too excited to care for anything but our own lives.

And we stood on the front lawn, shivering with excitement, when the clanging bells drew near and the firemen rushed to the rescue.

Smoke was streaming from every opening, and the streets were blocked with people who did not care so much about helping as about seeing the spectacle.

As a few articles of our furniture came tumbling out of the doors and windows, thrown ruthlessly out by the firemen, some of us managed to carry them into the streets to safety.

Some one said the kitchen range had exploded; another yelled that the flames had not broken through the ground floor. All was excitement and confusion, and we were feeling helpless and lost.

Kiel alone retained a cool head. He called us all together, and was the first to inquire if everybody were safe.

Then broke forth the question: "Where is Holmes?" No one knew, no one had seen him. It was several seconds, which passed like minutes, before any one offered a suggestion. It was Sallie Little that spoke first.

"Bug!" he cried, shaking with excitement; "Bug is asleep in his room."

Then we all took it up. We yelled to the firemen, the police, the spectators, to help find the missing man. And

not a soul moved a foot. The firemen were too busy fighting the flames to hear our calls for help; the police had all they could do to keep back the crowds, and the spectators must have lacked courage.

The excitement was beginning to tell on my strength, when I saw a dark figure shoot from our midst into the open door, through the blinding smoke, and up the yawning stairway.

Who was it?

In a whisper of awe came the response: "Kiel!"

The crowd saw the act, and sent up a shout of admiration. I thought to myself then that it was a useless undertaking, for the smoke would overcome him before he could make the rescue.

Anxiously we awaited the results. With nerves at the greatest tension, we could hardly speak our thoughts.

The seconds went by, minutes passed, and Kiel did not appear.

The smoke was becoming intense, and there was no sign of Kiel.

What could have happened?

Suddenly, around the corner of the ruined building, dashed—*Bug Holmes!*

He called to us to help him save some articles he had taken out from the back of the house.

All yelled at once: "Where is Kiel?"

Bug did not know.

A perplexing wonder came upon me. Could it be that he had gone to his death?

We told Holmes what had happened. He had escaped by the rear at the first sound of alarm, and had been working on the opposite side of the house with a volunteer band of fire fighters.

You heard how the house was gutted. The flames, breaking through the kitchen door, followed the elevator shaft to the roof. Everything was lost.

At the top of the stairway, in front of the door of Holmes' room, where he had been lapped by the roaring flames, lay—all charred and disfigured—Kiel!

A noble man he was, until that hour unrecognized, unappreciated!

Next day the fraternity meeting broke up with the words, *"Greater love hath no man than that he shall give his life for his friend."*

We felt—well, Sallie Little wept, and the rest of us wanted to. Sallie, alone, had known what a man we had among us.

Then this house was planned. It was dedicated to the memory of Kiel. All of us felt the same about it; we had an ideal of democratic brotherhood to venerate.

Holmes furnished this room. Rich, peaceful, is it not?

All of us contributed to the other parts of the house, but only Holmes was permitted to give to this.

You are the first man besides Bug to add the slightest touch. I wanted you to know the story before putting your books here, that you might realize how much we appreciate your gift.

Besides, I see they are a set of philosophical works—the kind Kiel liked so well. They can be placed on this shelf here, where he can look at them from the seats opposite.

It is no longer sad. What man is there who would not give his life for such honor?

But, then, he is not dead. He lives here—now—with you and me. A spirit of immortality hangs over the place—quiet and peaceful, like him—quiet and peaceful.

His Task Was Easy

HE—"This shopping business is an awful nuisance."

She—"Why, Henry, you have no reason to complain. I've done all the shopping. All you do is to carry the parcels."

Over An Open Circuit

THIS wireless telegraphy reminds me of a groundless quarrel."

"What possible connection is there between the two?"

"It's practically having words over nothing."

Bush League Chivalry

A NOVELETTE OF THE NATIONAL GAME

By Harold C. Burr

Like to be the manager of a team—the chap who has to delight the players by fining them now and then, and sending them to the bench for disobedience or other "errors" that baseball genius is given to? And when revolt comes? Then it is that the diplomat must become the fighter, with strategy often as his best weapon. An entertaining case in point is the one in this clever story.

(COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE)

CHAPTER I.

THE MANAGER'S WAY.

CRATER, manager of the Briarly team of the outlaw Big Eight League, was worried.

That Dan Martin should develop a grouch right in mid-season was hard luck. But that was all that could be expected from him.

Martin was a surly ball player at best. He slouched around his corner of the diamond, lower jaw thrust pugnaciously forward. He was typical of his craft in that he was willing to believe at the slightest provocation that he was being made the victim of a plot to keep him down.

Anyway, he had turned on his manager with a snarl; now he sulked, nursing his imaginary grievance in private. That it was fancied had nothing to do with the matter. The fact remained for him that it was a grievance.

Martin's attitude was death to harmony, bad for the rest of the team to see, perhaps pattern after. Furtively they began to watch him, to joke among themselves about it when Josh Crater was out of earshot.

One day one of them purposely disobeyed orders. Summers tried to trap a hit to the outfield, whereas Crater had told his outfielders time and again to play hits like that safe. Summers had stumbled headlong, and the ball had rolled to the fence for a fluky triple.

The manager jumped to the right conclusion. Summers was determining just how far the team could impose on its manager without being called to account.

But Crater didn't mention anything of the sort to him, didn't even call him for bungling what should have been only a single.

He acted decisively in another direction—carried it up to headquarters. He fined Dan Martin one hundred dollars, and suspended him ten days for insubordination.

Martin's bull neck went red to the ears.

"Say, boss," he whined, "what's it for, anyway? I ain't done nothing. I ain't saying a word—just minding my own business and playing the game every day. It was Johnnie Summers' fault. Why don't you bench him along with me?"

But Crater was thoroughly aroused to action. Outspoken opposition to his commands was like the smell of powder to a mettled charger going into battle.

He had thrown down the gauntlet. Already Briarly had dropped from breezing along in front to fifth place in the race for the flag.

And all because the cogs in the delicate machine weren't running smoothly.

If he was to bring the Buckomates under the wire among the first three, he must be up and doing, strong in his

rule, drastic. He had promised the owner he would do as much, and his job hung in the balance.

"You're to blame, Martin," he said shortly. "You know without being told that Summers is as gentle as a baby lamb. He's obedient, too. Normally, if I told him to go up to the plate and take an inshoot in the head, he'd do it, and no questions asked. But you've been teaching him bad tricks. He just naturally wants to find out if the old man's as soft as he acts—around you."

"That's right," sneered Dan, in an aggrieved tone of husky martyrdom; "put it all on me! Just because we're in a slump, blame some one." Suddenly his baleful black eyes shot venomously at Crater. "But you can't monkey with Dan Martin that way. I wear my cap over my eyes, but I see a whole lot. You're down on me; you want my scalp. That pet of yours, McKintrick—you'd like to see him holding down third, wouldn't you? But you don't dare take me off the bag on account of my hitting. The papers would roast you alive. Oh, I'm onto you!"

"That's childish."

Martin flung back his close-cropped head, and gave vent to an affected laugh.

"O-ho! You ain't got the nerve to deny it. 'Cause why? You can't. That's why. Well, I won't cough up that fine," added Dan, taking the bit squarely between his teeth.

"O-ho! You won't, won't you?" mimicked Crater dangerously. "All right, then, Martin, you needn't. But let me tell you if you don't—bing! Off goes your head. No more baseball for you in the Big Eight circuit. We'll have you blacklisted, boycotted."

"Go ahead, confound you!" blustered Dan loudly. "Guess I'm fast enough for the big show, anyway, without sticking around here."

Crater snapped his fingers.

"You'd never get beyond the tryout," he said; "then would come the kick-out. Why, all sixteen clubs in the American and National waived on you last year! Besides, you're an outlaw playing with us. You'd have to be reinstated first. Oh, no, Martin, I'm not afraid of your threats to quit."

That took all the starch out of Dan.

"All the same," he muttered sullenly, "you ain't giving me anything like a square deal. That fine's got to be revoked, and I ain't done nothing to draw a lay-off, either."

"What I said in the first place goes—one hundred dollars and ten days."

CHAPTER II.

A DECLARATION OF WAR.

Dan Martin made no further appeal. He knew better than to argue with Crater when he compressed his thin lips that way.

There were stories that he had heard of the old days when this same Crater had been an umpire and a good one. He never reversed a decision. That was one of the reasons he had been selected to pilot the Buckomates to two flags in four years at the helm. So, disgruntled, but hiding it in a knowing smirk, Martin, insurrectionist and creator of discord, moved doorward.

"Then, I'll see the boys," he called over his shoulder mysteriously.

Crater knew what that meant, but he was powerless to prevent it. Martin was off to stir up fresh sedition among the rest of the Briarly nine.

He was sure to find a sympathetic audience if not an enthusiastic one. He was of their kind—of the rank and file. Crater wasn't exactly their enemy, of course, but free comradeship with him was impossible. The position of manager over them called for a certain amount of dignity. Yes, they would naturally take sides with Dan Martin in the quarrel.

And sure enough, along about eight o'clock that selfsame evening, a delegation of eight men waited upon him in a body. The substitutes had been left below in the hotel lobby, where they lounged around nervously and listened to Dan repeat the story of his wrongs all over again.

Upstairs in his room, Manager Crater, in shirt sleeves and slippers, received the regulars. At their summons

his back was turned, feet democratically elevated to the low mantelshelf, slim-legged chair tilted far back. About his head was the drifting smoke wreaths of his cigar. As the men filed solemnly into the room, he was the picture of solid comfort, content.

"Hello, boys!" he greeted them, in simulated surprise, tossing aside the sporting page of the evening paper he had been absently reading. "Those of you who can't find chairs, hang yourselves on the ceiling."

Not the flicker of a smile crossed the grave faces that lined the opposite wall. Briggs, the field captain, stepped out of the rigid line as spokesman.

"It's about Martin, Josh. We want you to lift that suspension he's drawn down."

Crater nodded.

"Yes," he said, in soft encouragement noncommittally.

A vigorous chorus went along the line, backing up Briggs.

"That's what we want, sir," they declared.

"Well, boys, I'm sorry, but it can't be done. Martin's been indulging a case of the blue funks lately"—as if they didn't quite understand. "I've decided to give him a rest. When he gets back in the game, he'll be the better for the lay-off. You see, his disease is catching. But we won't have to vaccinate—merely remove the cause temporarily."

"Then, you won't give him another chance?" asked Briggs, in a queer, strained voice.

"Hardly."

The captain drew himself up; the line behind him drew together a trifle more compactly. "You'll have to take the consequences, then, Josh. We've heard both sides of the story, and we side with Martin. Don't we, boys?"

Again that united chorus of assent; this time like the growl of approaching thunder before the storm breaks.

Crater looked from one to the other of his rebellious men calmly. One and all they avoided his quick, businesslike, penetrating glance. But their mouths were shut in the thin, obstinate line he himself had made famous. No wavering there.

"Well?" he interrogated, still collected.

Briggs made reply steadily, without hesitation.

"In that event," he said, in the tone of an ultimatum, "we've got to stand by Dan. We'll quit you cold; go on strike."

"What's that!" fairly shouted Josh, the forelegs of his chair banging to the floor with a splitting shriek of protest from their frail limbs. "Say, have you fellows gone plumb loony or not? You can't desert me this way. It's—it's downright mutiny!"

"Call it what you like," Briggs said inexorably. "But that's just what we're going to do, and you can't stop us. To-morrow Briarly will be without a ball team; the rest of the schedule will go by forfeit. Then, who'll do the laughing, Josh? Owner Squires will be out a pretty penny on the deal. And all because you've got a grudge against poor Dan Martin. It's a shame!"

"I'll get me a new team," purred Crater. "What then?"

"In the middle of the season?" cooed Briggs, with sweet skepticism, as sarcastic about it as his manager. "No, Josh; there's no use in squirming. You'd better take what's coming to you. The national commission won't touch us. We're all outlaws and outside its jurisdiction. We've got you, Josh, this trip," he wound up exultantly.

"To get," Crater finished quietly, keeping his head and doing some tall thinking. "Do you think you can bully the president of the league along with me? You'll have to explain to him."

Briggs shrugged. "That won't help you any," he declared impudently; "not if we're drawn and quartered."

Crater put them off with this:

"Well, I'll let you know to-morrow in plenty of time for morning practice. Good night, boys."

Whereat they filed out as solemnly as they had arrived, not, however, without a sly glance in Crater's direction as they passed into the hall—a glance that was tinctured with triumph.

CHAPTER III.

SEEKING A PLAN.

The manager closed and locked the door with a frown of perplexity. It was squarely up to him, and he was also up against it.

He sat down rather suddenly, and gave it serious thought. Whether Briggs and the rest would carry out their threat if it came to a pinch made little difference. They were out to make trouble on behalf of Dan Martin. And he couldn't get along even one day without a ball team.

Quite by accident, his eye wandered to his discarded evening paper lying at his feet, sporting page up. Some heading he read there by merest chance held his attention. He had read that short article before the visit of the would-be strikers, and casually passed it on. It hadn't interested him then.

But now he read it through twice more, and all the time his excitement increased.

Finally he threw the paper aside, winked painstakingly and with great gravity at the unresponsive doorknob, and began leisurely to disrobe for bed.

Twenty minutes later he was peacefully asleep. The problem had solved itself simply.

In the morning he good-naturedly waylaid Briggs in the dining room, making the interview short and to the point.

"Lester," he asked, with seeming irrelevance, "did you ever hear of Princeton University?"

"Sure."

Satisfied, Crater thrust a newspaper clipping into the captain's hand.

"Here's a piece I cut out of the *Messenger*," he said. "It seems that practically the whole of this year's championship varsity is over at Ravenswood Inn, spoiling for some summer ball. Those Tigers are some players, too, I've heard. Guess a fast college crowd like that is good enough for a league like the Big Eight. What do you think? Catch the drift, catch it?"

Briggs didn't do much but scratch his head, and the exultant manager could well afford to let him do all the worrying from then on.

And yet the captain comprehended instantly.

"How do you know they'll play for you?" he said, a shade mechanically, regret creeping into his tone.

"Oh, I opened negotiations with them over the long-distance," explained Crater carelessly. "They're wild to come. To-day's an off day with us, but they'll be on hand to-morrow. Most of them have been graduated, anyway, so the faculty can't kick. Of course, I won't pay any salaries, and they'll work for the pure love of it. That will foot up a big saving for Squires."

Briggs was red from mortification.

"Aw, you go to the devil!" he flung out irritably, and hurried off to find Martin and tell him the bad news. "We'll beat you yet for all your bluffs."

"That boy Simmons—shortstop of theirs, is a corker, Lester," Crater yelled gleefully after him. "The Giants wanted to sign him this spring, but they weren't good enough. Briarly ought to land the bunting with him doing business at his usual stand."

Briggs made a bee line for the hotel café to find Dan Martin. That worthy was seated at one of the little mission-wood tables, gloweringly contemplating nothing. It was too early for him to heal his hurt feelings in the balm of the flowing bowl. Briggs dropped down opposite him, and fell to whispering.

Martin's cropped black hair literally bristled with disdain, indignation.

"Bah!" he scoffed, without comment on the captain's broad hints that since he had got them all into the scrape he ought to get them out somehow. "A lot of rah-rah boys! Leave 'em to me. I'll scare 'em off; eat 'em up." Martin rose belligerently, pulled his coat into place. "I'll go right over to Ravenswood and head them off."

Yanking his hat of fine straw snugly down over one smoldering eye, Dan Martin sallied forth. He caught the Ravenswood trolley at the corner, and settled into a near seat, nursing anew

his mistreatment at the hands of Crater.

The nine young athletes he was to dispose of he gave hardly a thought. To Martin, the professional, they were just so many pretty sons of wealthy fathers, who put up a nice ladylike article of ball.

Martin chewed away toughly, contemptuously.

CHAPTER IV.

VIOLENT TACTICS.

The approach to Ravenswood Inn by the electric cars is beautiful in summer. Most of the way is a tunnel under stately, rustling foliage. All the world is cool and green, with here and there a hint of percolating sunlight.

But Dan Martin saw none of the beauty. He swung off the running board at a lonely corner, and made a short cut across the golf links.

The hotel was just beyond the last bunker. From a distance the veranda looked deserted, but the suspended third sacker kept right on.

He stamped loudly up the steps just in time to prevent, by the narrowest of margins, running full tilt into a young fellow in tennis shoes and trousers, who was about to take the aforementioned steps at a leap.

He was a pleasant-faced young man, but the muscles under his soft flannel shirt didn't show to good advantage. That was where Martin was fooled, but he ought to have been warned by the straight, lean chin.

"Beg pardon," apologized the young man, smiling cordially. "My fault, old man."

Dan planted himself squarely in the way, bristling for war.

"Say, young fellow, I'm looking for that bunch of Princeton kids. Know any of them?"

"Slightly," returned the other easily, his cordial smile fading reluctantly. "I'm the chief instigator of that band of depraved hobos. I'm Captain Seybold. Glad to know you. What's your name?"

Martin came closer yet.

"Then you're the flyest of the lot," he sneered outright aggressively. "Well, my name's Martin, if you want to know. I'm the third baseman, whose job you're going to steal, and I'd as lief hit you with a bat as not! Take my advice, and keep off. We're a bad crowd to take steady work away from. That's all."

Seybold acted as if he had rushed up to a fancied acquaintance on the street from behind, only to find a stranger. "What are you talking," he asked curiously; "one of the dead languages?"

"You're quite a josher, ain't you!" Dan said derisively. "Just come on over to Briarly if you want to get hurt. The boys won't stand for any smart-alec college guys butting in." He looked the young fellow up and down insultingly. "Hanged if I ain't got half a mind to beat you up right now and have it over with!"

"Try it on!" invited Seybold eagerly, tossing his racket into an empty rocker. "And when you're done with me, hunt up some of the rest. We're all bears at mixing it."

That was Martin's excuse. If he got himself into difficulties afterward, he could lie and say that Seybold started the fighting. With a bellow like a goaded bull, he made a rush, arms swinging.

Now, it chanced that between baseball seasons, Seybold played football. Down in Jersey he had learned a few selected tricks worth remembering in rough-and-tumble warfare. He ducked nimbly as Martin went lumbering by, and lifted his knee adroitly.

It took Dan in the pit of the stomach, and he doubled like a jackknife. Martin rolled over and over in pain, and rose shakily. It was a blow that would have knocked out an ordinary man. But Martin was hard as nails. It merely knocked the fight out of him.

"So long there, old-spoiler-for-a-scrap!" Seybold called back from a distance. "See you to-morrow. Crater says we open for him at home."

Dan Martin cursed him, but let him go. Behind him in the wide doorway,

stood Josh Crater himself, feet wide apart, face agrin.

Dan shot him a vicious glance, and retreated in fairly good order to the rail fence around the golf course. There he sat down in the daisies and clover, and waited until he slowly evolved a plan of campaign of revenge.

He hung around the hotel all day, and managed to spot most of the Princeton contingent. At dark he retreated to the semisecurity of the fence again, and continued to wait his chance. He sulked ferociously, growling angrily to himself, his fingers twitching.

If one of the collegians happened that way, it might go hard with him. Martin was ripe to wreak his spleen on any of them. And one did. The spark of his cigarette glowed tinily up the road as he sauntered along, bareheaded, enjoying an after-dinner smoke all by his lonesome.

Dan Martin crouched down behind the bars. That blow of Seybold's rankled his pride. Like most bullies, he was a coward. He was afraid of Seybold—realized the mistake he had made in attacking him.

By now the smoker out in the road was almost abreast of him. From the brightly lighted inn floated laughter and the wail of violins tuning up. The man in the road was in evening clothes, shirt front gleaming white under the early stars, as, all unsuspecting, he came on.

Softly as a cat, Martin squirmed between the rails, and slipped up behind his victim, making no noise. In him he had recognized Simmons, the phenomenal little short-field man the New York Nationals had angled for in vain.

Martin swung his great doubled fist from behind without hesitation.

Simmons crumpled and fell, and made no sound—laid there in the dust, motionless.

Dan bent down in sudden panic. The collegian's face was ashen, and it didn't help matters that he stared so fixedly up at the starlit sky.

Dan couldn't see his shirt bosom move ever so slightly with his breathing. He dropped hurriedly to his knees, and ripped open the low-cut white vest. White and shaken, Martin got weakly back to his feet. Then he laughed queerly, and slunk off into the woods like a preying beast of the night.

CHAPTER V.

A SORE COLLECTION.

Over at Briarly a mass meeting of the disgruntled Buckomates out on strike was in progress. Briggs was chairman, and he was hearing each man's opinion in order, separately.

"Dan doesn't appreciate what we've done for him—what we're losing," declared Tompkins, who chased flies for his own living, his wife's, and the kid's at home. "It's a big sacrifice."

"That's what every good ball player ought to learn to do—sacrifice the other fellow along," interposed Morris meaningly. "It's half the game—of life."

Briggs, in whose room the discussion was being held, rapped with his knuckles on the footboard of the bed for order. "Boys," he said briskly, "we're not getting anywhere. The question is—what has Martin done for us over at Ravenswood? Once those college guys sign up with Crater, I'm afraid we're done for—unless Dan scares 'em away. I wish he'd report. I'm getting anxious."

As if in direct answer to the expressed wish, there was an imperative knock at the door. The man who was nearest got up, and opened it.

Dan Martin shouldered his way roughly into the room. His clothes were soiled and rent, his hair tangled, and he was breathing quickly. His lips were twisted into a kind of impatient snarl. Altogether there was something shivery about his aspect, his hunted expression, and restless eyes.

"Well," he announced thickly, "I've done it for you. Those brats Crater dug up won't have much stomach for ball playing around here. But it's been nasty business. I've got to lay almighty low for a spell—get out of the country. You've got to take up a collection and see me through."

Briggs gripped him by the shoulder.

"What's happened, Martin?" he demanded.

Dan twisted and cringed.

"Leave go of me," he pleaded whimperingly. "I ain't squealing. Only we're all in the same boat; that's all. You've got to help me get away."

"What's happened?" repeated the captain sharply. "Anybody'd think you'd been killing somebody."

"That's just what I've done," Martin nodded coolly. "You've got to see me clear."

An icy, clutching hand seemed to be closing at Briggs' throat.

"Man, man!" he gasped, in a weak shout. "You're joking."

"No, I ain't, neither," contradicted Dan hastily, licking his dry lips. Then he plunged into details. "I hid in the woods all last night," he wound up, "and hoofed it every step of the way back here when it was light enough to see. I was afraid the cars would be watched. You've got to help me escape—somewhere."

When he had finished, his teammates could only stare feebly at one another and at him. This was carrying a threat too far.

Briggs started to say something by way of censure, then checked himself. Those men knew what was expected of them, why Martin had risked his skin to return to them. But they were stunned and had to be reminded many times.

"Well, what are you waiting for?" demanded Martin. "Ain't you going to see me safe, after all? Give me what you've got in your clothes, and I'll try for the midnight at the junction. I can hide in the woods, waiting for her to go through. I'm getting used to it. The cops may be here after me any minute now."

Briggs took up the collection, donating his own scanty store first. Every man of them stood by Dan Martin, and emptied their pockets into the hat.

The desperate ball player wiped the back of his scratched hand across his mouth impatiently, and prepared to leave without so little as a "thank you." He had found a cap somewhere, and this he pulled low over his eyes. And he was gone, with a husky word of parting.

For a space silence reigned in that room. Another knock on the door made every one jump guiltily. As Briggs moved over awkwardly to admit this last caller, he was white and shaking. None of them knew for a certainty that *they* were beyond the pale of the law. If Martin ever came to trial, they might be held, convicted as accomplices. Meanwhile they shrank back, fearful of the unknown.

But it was only Manager Crater, of Briarly, who stood without in the hall this time, looking around at the anxiously craning necks within.

"Ah, gentlemen!" he said breezily, stepping in uninvited. "Just thought I'd drop around and see you boys for the last time. I suppose you'll be leaving town soon."

That was still a sore spot for him to probe at.

"Not if you'll concede us our rights," spoke up Briggs boldly, game to the last. "We like Briarly. The crowds and the papers have always given us a fair chance. And you can't deny, Josh, we've given the town a winning team."

Crater took a seat without embarrassment between his old pitcher and catcher, much to the discomfit of those two honest gentlemen lately implicated in a murder.

"Softly, softly," he urged. "That's all over and done with. You know how fickle the dear old public is. It'll forget you in a week. But I just wanted to drop in for a chat and wish you all good luck. Dayton, you ought to see that jewel Simmons eat up the hits before you go. He's an octopus with seventeen hands, and every one of 'em's got a glove on it. He's got you yelling for help from the scrap heap."

Simmons! The nine exchanged significant glances while former shortstop Dayton squirmed enviously.

"You haven't heard about it yet?" questioned Briggs quietly. "Well, it's bound to leak out, so I might as well be

the one to tell you Simmons is dead, poor duffer!"

"Dead?" gasped Crater. Then a light dawned, and he looked around the subdued circle, amused. "So Martin's been here with that fairy tale, has he?" tolerantly. "Well, let me tell you Simmons is a pretty lively corpse. Dan didn't hit him hard enough. He was only partly stunned. But he's some fox. He knew he didn't have a chance with a husky like Martin, he told me afterward, so he just faked at being done for, and held his breath. It worked. Martin went green around the gills, and beat it. He won't be seen around these parts soon again, believe me."

The manager got up, and yawned, stretching.

"I've got a sweet team for you, boys, now," he remarked. "Beat Logansport this afternoon ten to two. And they're last year's champions at that. Well, so long, everybody."

And he drifted out, leaving behind him the sorest collection of ball tossers in seven States.

Fencing With Singlesticks

By Prof. Fairfax

How to attain skill in a fine sport that develops both mental and bodily agility

THE novice at practice with singlesticks must not forget that his "sword"—although only a thing of wood—is supposed to have a point; at the same time, I would impress upon you that the point should only be used with extreme care, as you may guess a severe dig is far from being pleasant or safe. It would be as well for a learner to avoid using the point and attacking the head, until he has thoroughly acquainted himself with the guarding and hitting movements.

In order to drive in the point of your sword, as it were, you should make a direct and firm lunge. Extend the arm to its full length, and when in the act of making the lunge for a point, bring the thumb groundward, knuckles and sword edge upward.

Hold the handle of your stick loosely, so that when the point comes in contact with your opponent's body the stick will easily slip through your hand and basket. By doing this, you will be winning your point, and at the same time avoiding a bad accident.

The point of the stick is frequently used, and it is well to remember that the best time to bring it into action is after guarding a hit, and the point itself can be guarded against by any of the guards here mentioned.

Another way of guarding against the point is to draw the wrist, or the hilt of your stick, slightly toward the shoulder, and then, smartly working your wrist, bring the stick round to the right, and forming a circle, round to the left, back to its former position.

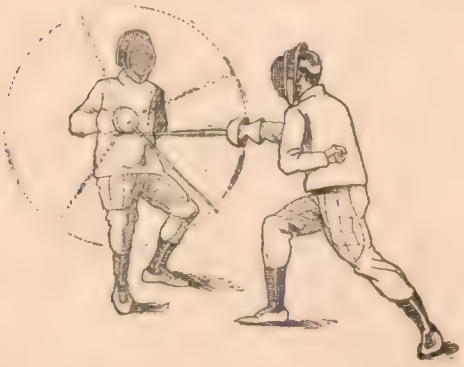
Or as circumstances may place you, the stick may be brought round in the

opposite direction, round from left to right. This form of guarding against the point serves splendidly as a wrist exercise, but in a serious fencing bout I would recommend the use of any of the simple guards as being the most reliable.

Experience will teach you many tricks of feinting, and in course of time

you will be able to deceive your opponent in the form of making your attack in many ways, but this will come to you as time goes on and in the course of practice, especially with new adversaries.

A good piece of fun can be derived



by two men firmly securing a stout stump of wood into their helmets, one with a red paper plume and the other a white one, fixed into a slit made in the wood. The one who knocks or smashes the plume from his opponent's helmet, of course, wins the match. This form of bout concentrates the whole attack upon the upper guards, and it should be seen that the head and throat are particularly safeguarded.

Upon engaging, you must grasp the handle—firmly, but not tightly—of your stick inside the basket, with the thumb resting along the back of the sword. So, presuming you are in the engaging position, the blade of your sword and the knuckles of your fingers would be facing the ground, while your thumb would be pressed along the back.

The six principal hits are at the left cheek, at the right cheek, at the left ribs, at the right ribs, at the left thigh, at the right thigh respectively, and it is for you to guard against these hits.

The first hit, which is made by lunging forward and cutting at the left cheek, is guarded by carrying the right hand well above the level of the shoulder, with arm slightly bent, and with the point of your stick pointing upward and at a slight angle to the left. As your opponent lunges and tries to make a cut at your left cheek, you will meet the sharp edge of his supposed sword with the sharp edge of your own.

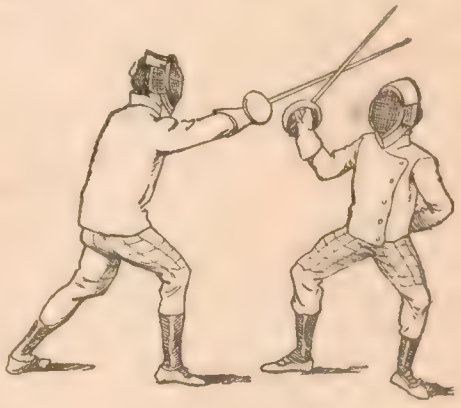
After warding off the blow of the first hit, as described above, do not make a slash back at your opponent, but think before making a hit at him, and make every effort to send in your blow at a point he has left open, or cannot easily or quickly guard.

If you cannot see a reliable chance of doing this, prepare for the next hit, as he may make several strokes in rapid succession, at the end of which you may see a better opportunity of gaining a winning point.

When learning, do not make blind hits just for the sake of attacking, but let accuracy and speed come as an unconscious reward in the course of practice.

The second hit, which is made by lunging forward and cutting at the right cheek, is guarded against by bending the arm at the elbow, putting the arm out at half right, and inclining the stick to the left. The position shown in the diagram is what is known as the upright guard, but the downward guard may be used.

The third hit is a cut at the left ribs, and is guarded against by carrying the



right hand just above the level of your left shoulder, with arm slightly bent and with your stick pointing downward at a slight angle to the left. This hit can sometimes be guarded by the upright guard, but the downward is regarded as the better.

To guard hit four, which is a re-

verse cut to hit three, the arm is bent at the elbow and the stick pointed a little downward, and inclined slightly to the left. As in guarding hit three, you may use the upright guard, and you must remember always to meet your opponent's stick with the sharp edge of your stick, or supposed sword.

Hits five and six, cuts at left and right thighs respectively, are met with in the same way as with three and four, viz., a low downward guard, but never with the upright guard.

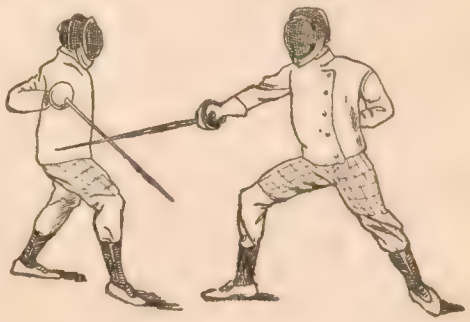
It is advisable for every learner continually to practice guarding and hitting exercises until he is thoroughly acqainted with them, and for this one's friends will serve the purpose. In entering a proper and earnest fencing bout, however, you should not always approach the same man, but fence only with men who can use the stick better than yourself.

Acknowledge instantly the faintest suspicion of a hit on any portion of your body by touching the spot with your left hand, and then, quickly springing to the attention, bring your sword smartly up in front of you, with the thumb on the level with your mouth, and the sharp edge of your sword facing your opponent. It is well to remember that courtesy is the soul of fencing, and never to emphasize any hit you imagine you have made.

Always keep an open mind as you approach every new adversary. Discover his weak point and remember your own, and if he is a slugger meet him calmly and beat him by skill.

Never lose your temper and retaliate viciously, and on no account beat him by brute strength, because you only make bad blood and spoil the grand sport you are interested in.

In making a lunge, the left foot remains tightly on the ground, with every part of the sole of the shoe firmly plant-



ed on the floor. This is one of the most essential factors in fencing, and one of the hardest to learn, and without it the lunge loses half its force and precision, and the recovery must inevitably fail in accuracy and balance.

When lunging, the right foot is only just sufficiently lifted up to enable the heel to clear the floor. Though the whole weight of the body swings upon the right knee, upon which it is forced down, its position as regards the shoulders and head remain as upright as before.

You must spring back from the lunging position to the engage quickly, and without losing the correct position of your feet or overbalancing. If this is not done accurately, you will leave yourself open to a severe cut from your opponent.

A Question of Gender

I WANT a ribbon for my typewriter," remarked the village lawyer, as he entered a great emporium.

"All right, sir," answered the new storekeeper. "Do you want one for her, or for it?"

Chestnut in a New Bur

MAMMA—"Johnny, I shall have to tell your father what a naughty boy you have been."

Johnny—"I reckon dad's right when he says a woman can't keep a thing to herself."

By the Law of Might

By Robert N. Reeves

In the grip of the merciless, man-made laws of the mining camp and the arid desert, a victim must do some quick thinking. Read what came of it in the desperate case of Billy Russell, miner.

CHAPTER I.

A ROUGH DEAL.

IN the vanguard of the first frenzied stampede to Red Rock, Billy Russell scurried across the blistering desert sands with his prospector's outfit and his heavily laden pack mules.

With the grime of desert dust still clinging to him, he staked out a claim, obtained the necessary men to help, sank a shaft, and, in short order, struck the mother lode.

Within a few short months he had sacked and freighted many tons of rich ore across the desert to the smelters, and his mine had continued to pour out rich-paying ore.

He called it the Golden Dip Mine, and old-timers at the mining game said that if the Golden Dip did not pinch out, Billy would become one of the bonanza kings of the district. And Billy, young and optimistic, had every reason to believe that the mine would not pinch out.

But suddenly he was plunged into the depths of despair.

Con Maguire, the big man of Red Rock, financially, politically, and physically, jumped the claim, and suspended the operations at the Golden Dip Mine with injunctions; and Billy saw ahead of him only costly litigation and ultimate disaster, so far as his interests in the mine were concerned.

He knew that Maguire—gambler, deputy sheriff, and mine owner—was a man with whom few cared to cope in either a physical or legal combat. He knew, too, how popular the vigorous, unscrupulous shrewdness of Maguire had made him with the free-and-easy class of the camp, and how, with the help of this class, Maguire had grown to wealth and power.

Not one of the string of claims that Maguire owned had been obtained honestly and aboveboard. Billy knew this; he knew that where the claims had not been won in the gambling houses from drunken miners, they had been won in the courts with the aid of perjured witnesses anxious to make a few dollars and earn a profession of friendship from Maguire.

Now that Maguire had turned upon him and seized the mine, Billy concluded that to fight it out with him would be like throwing good money after bad.

He had thought it all over time and again of late, and figured his chances from every possible angle as he sat in the narrow room of Red Rock's two-story hotel, with pipe in mouth and with the hot wind and white alkali dust of the desert blowing in at his window.

Well, he told himself philosophically, he had enough of the mining game. He would go to Maguire and make the best settlement he could with him, sign away his rights in the Golden Dip, lay aside his heavy boots, his flannel shirt and corduroys, take what money he had, and leave the hot and dusty camp to its noisy barrooms, its clamorous dance halls, and turbulent, smoke-clouded gambling houses.

After all, it was the most desolate and forbidding spot, he really believed, in the United States. He would go back to civilization and happiness—back to the Eastern town whence he had come, where the grass was green and the fruit glowed ripe upon the trees.

Billy tossed his pipe resignedly over

upon the big packing box that served him as a desk, and descended to the street.

It was Saturday night, and the streets were crowded with miners who had come in from the hills and the desert. Across from the hotel, in the long row of one-story buildings, almost every one of which was either a saloon, gambling house, or dance hall, the nightly clanging of the pianos and the whir of roulette wheels was going on with more than usual vigor.

He crossed the street, and passed through the swinging doors of Maguire's own place in search of its proprietor.

Inside, he found the place filled with miners and gamblers, who were drinking at the long, rude bar, and crowded about the slot machines and gambling tables.

In the rear, he saw Maguire seated at a poker table. He started toward him; then he paused.

"No use to talk to him now," he muttered, backing up against the end of the bar, and gazing intently at the giant form of Maguire.

Puffing thoughtfully at a cigar, Billy stood for some minutes gazing at Maguire, as the latter, unconscious of his gaze, continued to deal out the cards.

Billy studied the large, florid face of the man, and noted, as he had often noted before, the beetling brows, the firm lips, and the heavy jaw that looked as if it had all the unrelenting strength of a bear trap.

"I'm right," he said to himself; "I can never win against a man like that. It would take a millionaire and an army of soldiers to get the Golden Dip out of his clutches now."

Dejectedly he joined the crowd around the roulette table, behind which stood a rat-eyed man. There was a momentary lull in the play, and the operator, giving the wheel a spin, sent the little white ball on its journey after another victim.

"Step right up, gents, and try your luck!" he sang out. "Around she goes, and where she stops, nobody knows. Remember! I don't make fish of one and flesh of another. Every one gets a square deal and—— Thirteen, the red. You lose, brother."

The man raked in a handful of coin, and his slim fingers gave the wheel another spin.

Billy looked over the shoulders of the crowd, and saw that it was Charley Stewart, a big, rawboned cowboy, who had floated into camp from Arizona, that had lost. He saw, too, that Stewart was in a sad state of intoxication.

As the ball settled again into its place with a click, the rat-eyed man cried out: "Double O; you lose again, my friend."

Charley Stewart slowly put his hand in his pocket, and when he drew it forth it was filled with ten and twenty-dollar gold pieces. The eyes of the operator glittered as he saw the money, and Billy, glancing suddenly aside, saw Maguire, who had joined the crowd around the roulette table, give the man a significant wink.

CHAPTER II.

BLOCKING THE GAME.

For a long time, there had been bad blood between Stewart and Maguire, because Stewart was the only man in Red Rock who had ever had the satisfaction of telling Maguire in plain, strong language what he thought of him and then live to boast of it.

Once, in a brawl, Stewart had called Maguire a cowardly thief and claim jumper, and backed up his words with a six-shooter. Maguire had looked coolly into the muzzle of the gun, observed the steel-gray eyes that scanned its long barrel and the steady hand that held it, and for the first time in his life had welshed. But he let the word go forth that in time he would "get" Charley Stewart.

Billy and Stewart had taken a liking to each other, though occasionally Billy grew suspicious of the big, rough, dare-devil cowboy, who seemed to come to Red Rock for no other purpose than to make trouble for the saloonkeepers, gamblers, and habitués of the dance halls.

It was just such a man, fearless and handy with a gun, thought Billy, that was liable at any moment to take it into his head to hold up a stage or a pack train on the desert.

Nevertheless, Billy could not help admiring the man. From time to time he had loaned him money, and, in a friendly spirit, advised him to get out of the camp, or sooner or later some one would surely murder him.

But Stewart only smiled in a sinister way at this advice.

"Ef they think they can git me any quicker'n I can git them, they're welcome to have a try," was the only reply he would make.

Under ordinary circumstances, Billy would never have interfered between Stewart and the operator, but he knew what that wink from Maguire meant. Somewhere under the roulette table, there was a little button or clutch that would regulate the play, and Stewart would never leave the place until his last dollar had been taken from him.

Elbowing his way through the crowd, Billy touched Stewart on the arm.

"Charley," he said, "I want to see you on some important business at once."

He said it quickly, as if he had just come into the place and had been looking for him.

Stewart hesitated, then dropped the handful of clinking gold back into his pocket, and turned stupidly away from the table.

The eyes of Maguire and the dealer met, and black scowls came over their faces as they watched Billy lead Stewart out of the gambling house.

On reaching the street, Billy said: "Charley, I can't say what I want to out here—too many card sharps around—come up to my room; I've got something I want to tell you."

Stewart followed Billy to his room without a murmur of protest, wondering to himself what was up. Seating his visitor comfortably in a chair, Billy went below, and soon came back with a hot cup of black coffee.

"Drink this, Charley," he commanded authoritatively; "it'll put sense into you."

As the cowboy drank the last drop of it, Billy seated himself on the edge of the bed.

"Charley," he said, "you've got a good wife and two kids in Phoenix. They think the world of you, and want you to come home. You told me you were going there as soon as you sold that little claim of yours out on the desert. You told me how you loved them, and how you were going to make them happy, and what you were going to buy for them—the new dresses for the wife and the pretty clothes and toys for the kids, and all that.

"Yesterday," he went on, "you sold your claim for five hundred dollars, gold, and now what are you doing with it? The first thing that you do is to start in and fight the booze until you're so drunk that you don't know whether you're on foot or horseback. And then what do you do; you start to buck a lot of sure-thing layouts, where a man doesn't stand one chance in a hundred when he's sober, let alone when he's drunk. And you're not particular where you lose your money, either, but make straight for Maguire's joint. You know what kind of a square deal Maguire and his coyotes will give you."

Stewart rubbed his hands nervously across his face.

"Now, it's none of my business," continued Billy, "what you do with your money; I know that, and I'm not trying to dictate to you, but, somehow, when I was watching you lose there in Maguire's, I happened to think of what you told me about your wife and kids, and I thought that perhaps in the excitement you had kind of forgotten about them, and I just brought you up here to remind you."

Stewart's eyes filled with tears. For several minutes he was silent. Then suddenly he put his hand in his pocket, walked over to the bed, and dropped the contents of the pocket upon it.

"You're right!" he exclaimed bluntly. "It ain't fit and proper for me to have that money—count it, and see how much I've got left."

Billy counted it. "There's just three hundred and sixty dollars. That makes

a hundred and forty that you've blown in since yesterday. What do you want to do with what you have here?" he said impatiently.

"You take it, and keep it for me until I'm straightened out," answered Stewart. "It's safe in your hands, but not in mine—not jest now."

He placed his hand on Billy's shoulder in a grateful manner. "I ain't a-goin' to forgit," he said, "what you've done for me to-night, and now I'm a-goin' to take your advice and hit straight for my cabin and git some sleep."

CHAPTER III.

EXILED.

As Stewart went out into the street, Billy followed him as far as the door; then he went over to the hotel keeper, and handed him a small sack of gold.

"Put this in your safe," he said, "and when Charley Stewart shows up sober, give it to him, and when you do just mention a word or two to him about Phoenix."

Then Billy returned to his room, and went to sleep. How long he slept, he did not know, but he was suddenly awakened by a loud knock on the door, and on opening it was confronted by a shiftless character of the camp, who made a precarious living by running errands for the miners and gamblers.

"What do you want?" asked Billy, but half awake.

"It's about Charley Stewart," was the stammered reply. "'E's been 'urt, and 'e said as how I was to get 'elp for 'im. 'E's a-dyin', and wants to talk to you about somethin' mighty important; yes, sir, 'e's in his cabin."

Billy hurriedly threw on his clothes, and descended to the street. The messenger had disappeared.

Billy looked at his watch, and saw that it was two hours after midnight. Except for a few straggling miners, the streets were deserted, although within the gambling houses the lights still burned brightly and the clicking of chips and the rattle of slot machines could plainly be heard. Turning from the street into a narrow road, he walked hurriedly toward the outskirts of the camp, where Stewart had his cabin.

He had gone but about half the distance when he heard a quick footstep behind him. He wheeled about suddenly, and his hand went instinctively to his hip pocket. But before he could draw his revolver, he was struck a blow upon the head that set his brain in a whirl.

As he fell he thought he saw dimly the forms of three or four men jumping out from behind the brush by the side of the road and running toward him. Then he lapsed into unconsciousness.

When he next opened his eyes, he found himself lying on a blanket in a room where the air was close and stifling. His head throbbed as if it would burst. He sat up, and tried to recall what had brought him to that condition, but he sank back exhausted with an incoherent murmur upon his lips.

After a while he raised himself again to his hands and knees, and crawled through the darkness and dirt, and felt along the cobwebbed walls until he came to a closed door. Feeling painfully upward, his hand came in contact with a latch, and he tried to raise it. Instantly there was a knocking on the outside of the door, as of a club or butt end of a gun, and a voice that startled him shouted:

"Lay down, you, or I'll shoot you full of holes!"

Billy laid quiet after that, because he was too weak to offer resistance.

When the first gray light of the morning crept through the barred and broken window, he saw that he was a prisoner in the miserable shack that Con Maguire had converted some months before into a jail.

He had hardly had time to note the wretched condition of the place before Maguire entered with five tough-looking citizens of about his own heavy build. It was Maguire's notorious "Vigilance Committee," and, as Billy knew every man of it by name as well as reputation, he nodded stiffly toward them.

He had always looked upon this committee as the worst band of scoundrels that had ever acted in the name of justice, and he knew that Maguire owned every man of it, body and soul.

With eyes blazing, Billy limped defiantly toward Maguire.

"So that was some of your committee's fine work last night? Five or six of you, and you had to sneak up behind me in the dark! You're a plucky gang!" He spoke scathingly, and there was an ominous silence on the part of the committee.

"I suppose you are all sore," he continued, "because I didn't let you pick Charley Stewart clean last night, and this is the way you have of——"

"Shut up!" roared Maguire; "none o' your bluff!"

"There's no bluff about it. I intend to——" But Billy's words were drowned by a howl from Maguire's committee.

"Chuck him on the horse," commanded Maguire. And struggling vainly in the muscular arms of the Vigilance Committee, Billy was carried out of the shack.

In the road he saw his horse and two of his burros, laden with blankets and other property taken from his room in the hotel.

He was carried to the horse, and thrust roughly into the saddle. He knew well enough what they intended to do with him. They were going to drive him out of Red Rock, as they had many another man against whom Maguire had grievances, real or imagined.

For a brief moment he contemplated throwing himself from his horse and grappling with Maguire and his gang. But that, he at once reasoned, would be a foolish thing to do. They would shoot him down like a dog. It would be far better to let them have their way.

He would go to Carson City, and would work night and day with the lawyers and politicians there until Con Maguire—this czar of the desert—was shorn of his tyrannical power.

So, placing his feet firmly in the stirrups, he let them lead him to the town limits, where the desert stretched before him, hot and forbidding, beneath the brazen sun.

"There's all your belongings on the burros, and I took the trouble to fill up the water bags and canteens. You can reach the spring by night and fill up again—now git!" growled Maguire, brandishing his revolver threateningly. And the rest of the gang gave the burros each a resounding slap on the flank that sent them scurrying after Billy's horse.

CHAPTER IV.

"TIME TO THINK."

Billy Russell had often braved the blistering, torturing desert sands and suffered. But now all the remorseless heat was as icy coldness to the fire that raged within him and seemed all but to consume him.

He pulled the brim of his sombrero lower over his eyes to shut out the fierce glare of the sun, and grimly pushed onward toward the distant buttes.

Under the brazen sky, over the arid sands and glistening alkali, through dry, dust-covered mesquite and repulsive cactus, he slowly pursued his way.

Several times, as he looked back over the sandy waste through the blue heat haze, he thought he saw a speck moving toward him, and, later in the day, another one still farther away. But he knew the ocular pranks that the desert plays, and concluded that what he saw were phantasms of the brain, caused by the glare and heat of the sun and sand.

By night he reached the dark patch beyond the sand buttes where the desert spring was located. It was a gorge in which were numerous water pockets formed by the rains that had seeped through the towering granite to the gorge bottom.

The place was full of scrubby underbrush, which shade and moisture had permitted to gain a foothold, and for the weary, thirsty desert traveler it was a heaven of heavens.

Searching among the packs, he found a supply of pressed alfalfa and some rolled barley which he fed to the horse and burros. After nibbling at some dry

biscuits and drinking deep from one of the water pockets, he tied the beasts to some scrub joshua trees to prevent them from straying, and lay down, protecting himself from the drifting night sands which the wind whipped into the gorge, by throwing his blanket over a couple of mesquites whose branches spread out above him.

He tried to sleep, but what had happened tormented him and mystified him, and the distant howl of the coyote and the cry of the nighthawk came jeeringly to his ear.

When he did sleep, it was to dream the hideous dreams of a troubled mind. Through it all he seemed to see the tight-lipped, heavy-jawed face of Maguire calling and threatening him. Billy groaned and restlessly threw his arms out onto the dewless sand.

The voice of Maguire seemed to be drawing nearer. Its loudness caused him to open his eyes.

There was something straight and black standing before him. There had been no tree there when he lay down; besides, trees such as that did not grow upon the desert.

He opened his eyes wide, dazed. Con Maguire was standing in front of him.

Billy sat straight up.

"Well, what do you want?" he asked savagely.

"You ought to know by this time," replied Maguire, with an irritating drawl. "I've been thinking this business over, and I've about made up my mind that we let you off too easy. A man that's too much of a long-hair to gamble once in a while is bad enough, but a fellow that butts into a game and interrupts another man's play ain't any good at all. I saved you last night. A word from me, and half a dozen of the boys would 'a' filled your hide with lead!"

Billy Russell made no reply.

"But I didn't come way out here to scold you about that," went on Maguire; "I've got something more important on my mind. The case of the Golden Dip Mine comes up in Carson City at the next term of court, and I won't have any time to go there. Besides, you don't stand any show to win, and I guess if you will sign away your rights now and accommodate me with a check—dating it back a few days—for the money you've got in the bank, there'll be no more trouble, and you and me will part friends. I put your check book in the saddlebag this morning, and the papers for the mine are all made out right and proper." He drew a long envelope from his pocket.

Billy had thought many things since first he set out across the desert. He had tried time and again to fathom the real motive of Maguire's vindictiveness. Now it was so apparent that he smiled. It was a smile of grim bitterness.

"And if I refuse to do it?" he said tauntingly.

Maguire drew his big revolver from its holster, and looked relentlessly into Billy's blazing eyes.

"If you refuse," he replied deliberately, "I will leave your bones on the desert for the coyotes and buzzards to fight over to-morrow."

Billy was silent, but a thousand wild desires thronged his brain. If only he were a giant to cope with the brute that stood before him, he would fly at him and rend him as a lion rends a bullock. If only he had a gun, how he would like to try his aim with even that of the skilled marksman he knew Maguire to be—a chance shot might lay him low.

His eyes played swiftly over Maguire, from the gloating gray eyes to the gleaming steel of his revolver.

"Maguire, give me time to think," he said.

CHAPTER V.

THE DARK SHADOW.

With the magnanimity of the executioner who grants the request of the man upon the gallows, Maguire waited.

In the deathlike hush that followed, Billy thought, and thought fast. Suppose he did sign away the mine and the money in the bank, Maguire would not be foolish enough to let him live and have the deed and the checks voided. He was too shrewd for that.

Once he had succeeded in bending him to his will, he would murder him

in cold blood and leave him, as he had said, to the coyotes and the buzzards.

In the tense, torturing minutes that passed, Billy's eyes wandered dazedly over Maguire's shoulder to the silent, dark gorges beyond.

There was something stealthily moving, shadowlike, along one of the ledges.

At first he thought it was a panther or some stray coyote, but as he fixed his eye on it the thing grew larger, and straightened up until he saw, dimly outlined against the rocks, a figure that strangely resembled a human form. Something glittered there, too, in the darkness. It fascinated him, this figure of flesh and blood that came cautiously, silently around the bowlders and over the ledges toward him.

He watched it with strained eyes, and marveled that it had not attracted the attention of Maguire.

A bit of cloud fleece that partly obscured the moon floated by, and in the new light Billy saw Charley Stewart leap from the lowest ledge to the gorge bottom.

"Maguire, put up your hands!"

The words rang loud, exultant in Billy's ears.

Maguire wheeled. There were simultaneous flashes from his gun and from that held by Stewart, and Maguire dropped to the sand with a groan.

Stewart came running forward, with his gun still smoking in his hand. He went close up to the silent form of Maguire, and gazed with a sardonic grin at the blood oozing from the wound in the forehead.

"So you were goin' to git me, eh?" he said, in a tone of triumph. Then he turned to Billy.

"Con Maguire was a big feller, all right—deputy sheriff, lots of coin, heaps of power with the politicians, and all that; but he didn't have a streak of honor in him as big as a whisker on a bob-cat's face. A couple of us fellers got wise when he drove young Dick Kelley out of Red Rock. Nobody ever saw Kelley after that. His horse come back 'most ready to drop, but there wasn't a dollar or a paper in the saddlebags; nothin' but two guns with not a ca'tridge in 'em disturbed.

"I crawled out of my cabin about noon to-day," continued Stewart, "and I heard what had happened to you, and I started to make an awful holler about it. By and by I seen Maguire cinching up his saddle and a-filling his canteens. Then I shut up and kind of kept my eyes on him. In a little while I seen him out over the desert, and I says to myself: 'Charley Stewart, there's a-goin' to be murder done on the desert.' And I slips my guns into the holsters, and, sayin' nothin', I hikes after him."

In the silent hours of the early morning, they threw a blanket over the outstretched form of Maguire, and, refilling their canteens, began the hot, weary ride back to Red Rock.

Upon their arrival, near night, Billy fully expected to see the camp in a savage turmoil when the killing of Maguire became known, and that there would be threats and counter threats, and that some would not rest until the death of Maguire had been avenged. But after the first excitement had worn off, the camp settled down to a peaceful discussion of Maguire's past offenses, and the coroner, in a matter-of-fact way, prepared to go out on the desert next morning to bring in the body.

Shortly after the coroner returned to camp, he came excitedly into Billy Russell's room.

"Billy," he said, "perhaps you don't know it, but I'm your friend. Maguire wasn't on the square. Read these documents. I found them in Maguire's pocket." He thrust a bundle of letters and documents into Billy's hand.

Billy read them eagerly. When he had finished, he turned to the coroner. "Can I have them?" he asked anxiously.

"Sure you can," was the reply; "that's why I brought 'em to you; and, if any of Con Maguire's friends or heirs keep up the fight for the Golden Dip Mine, just show those documents, and I'll bet there ain't a court from here to New York and back again that won't say the Golden Dip is yours."

The Snapshot Mystery

By Bertram Lebhar

That you can never tell what the eye of the camera sees, or what the chap that holds the bulb is going to spring next, is demonstrated more dramatically, entertainingly and laughably than ever in this final section of the "best yet" Camera Chap tale.

PRECEDING CHAPTERS
Condensed so that those who have not read them may do so now and go on with the rest of the story

Frank Hawley, the camera man of the *Sentinel,* is sent to the Lunard docks by his city editor to meet the incoming *Musitania,* and obtain a picture of Lord Destyn, a distinguished Englishman who is about to marry the daughter of the American millionaire, Joshua B. Blanchard. After a series of misadventures he arrives at the dock too late to see the celebrity, but learns that the other newspaper men were thwarted in their attempts to get pictures.

Hawley hastens to the Blanchard residence to try his luck at getting an interview with Lord Destyn, and finds a young girl, Ruth Hastings, just leaving the door. She has tried to enter the house, with her camera, on her first assignment from the *Daily News,* but has been repulsed by the haughty butler.

A district messenger boy comes along with a package for Lord Destyn, ostensibly from the British consulate, and Hawley, seeing his chance, bribes the boy to lend him his coat and cap and let him deliver the package. He persuades the butler to show him into the presence of the nobleman, and is about to declare his identity and beg for a chance to take a flash-light picture, when the Englishman tears off the wrappings of the package and it explodes with an alarming detonation. No one is hurt, however, and a letter that falls from the package explains that it was sent as a warning, and that if Lord Destyn does not immediately abandon his idea of marrying the heiress, and return to his native country, he will be assassinated. Hawley explains his part in the affair, and is allowed to go free.

Hawley and Miss Hastings are sent to the railroad station to obtain snapshots of Lord Glaster, a cousin of Lord Destyn, who is coming from Canada to act as best man at the wedding. Lord Glaster allows the newspaper men to take all the pictures they want, and chats with them affably. He singles out Miss Hastings, and asks her if he has not met her before. With much bitterness she tells him she has never seen him before, but that she resembles her beloved brother who was shot as a Boer spy, in South Africa, by the order of Lord Glaster, himself.

On the day of the great wedding, the camera men and Miss Hastings are massed before the church in great numbers, when the wedding party begins to arrive. Lord Destyn and his best man, Lord Glaster, step from a carriage and stop for a moment, good-humoredly, to allow the newspaper men to snap their cameras. A volley of shutter clicks sounds from the crowd, and at the same moment a pistol shot rings out and Lord Glaster falls to the ground, wounded in the breast. A panic ensues, but a mounted inspector of police rides into the crowd and orders the camera men to stay where they are until a search can be made for the assassin.

During the examination of the cameras, Ruth Hastings lets hers fall beneath the feet of the inspector's horse, and it is smashed. The inspector accuses her of dropping it to avoid the examination, and all of the fifty photographers are then taken to police headquarters for further examination.

Inspector McCartney, chief of the detective bureau, puts Miss Hastings through the third degree and fastens all the circumstantial evidence of the case upon her. He is about to let the other photographers go free, when Frank Hawley begs permission to take a flash-light picture of the group for his newspaper. This is permitted after he promises to give each of the camera men a copy of the picture.

All but one of the camera men call at his office that evening for the pictures, and he singles the missing man out of the picture as the probable assailant of Lord Glaster. He cuts the picture of his suspect out of the group and has an enlargement made. This he submits to Inspector McCartney with a request that a general alarm be sent out for the arrest of the man. McCartney resents his interference in the case, and Hawley leaves him, vowing that he will run down the mysterious man himself.

CHAPTER XXI.

COUNSEL FOR THE DEFENSE.

SITTING on the edge of the cot, which was the only article of furniture in the cell wherein she had spent a wretched, sleepless night, Ruth Hast-

ings eagerly perused the batch of morning newspapers which the kind-hearted police matron had brought her.

She was not surprised to find that her name was prominently mentioned in the headlines of the dramatic stories of the shooting of Lord Glaster, which filled several pages of each newspaper, but she was horrified to discover the unanimity with which they indorsed the action of the police in charging her with the attempted assassination.

There was not a single newspaper which even as much as intimated that Inspector McCartney might be mistaken in accusing her of the crime. The entire press agreed that the evidence, circumstantial though it was, admitted of but one conclusion—that the bullet which had felled the British nobleman had come from her camera.

What distressed her most of all was to find that the *Daily News*—the newspaper she worked for—was even more emphatic than the others in pronouncing her guilty. In addition to the account in its news columns, that journal published a long editorial, praising Inspector McCartney for the skill and alertness he had displayed in solving the camera mystery so promptly, and expressing deep regret that the young woman accused of the crime should have been in the employ of the *Daily News*.

Tears sprang to the eyes of the unhappy camera girl when she found herself thus repudiated by the newspaper which she had confidently expected would come to her aid.

There was one thing which caused her face to light up with pleasure, however, and that was the sight of the fine, clear, half-tone pictures which illustrated the *News'* story of the Blanchard-Destyn wedding and its tragic interruption.

"I see that Mr. Hawley did not forget his promise," she mused. "What a good fellow he is. It is some comfort to know that he, at least, believes in my innocence."

Her meditations were here broken in upon by the police matron, who came to the barred door of her cell and announced: "There's a young man outside begging to be allowed to see you. Claims to be an intimate friend of yours."

"Is his name Hawley?" inquired the camera girl eagerly.

"No; Gale. Leastwise that's the name he gives here. He says he's a reporter on the same paper you work for. He's got another man with him, a middle-aged, sporty-looking fellow."

A frown came to the girl's face at the mention of the name Gale. She did not like this reporter, who, ever since the first day of her employment on the *Daily News*, had been pressing his attentions upon her.

Just why she disliked him, Ruth Hastings could not explain. The young man's behavior toward her had been quite inoffensive, and she knew of no serious defects in his character, but somehow she had formed an instinctive prejudice against him the very first time they met, and she had done her utmost to discourage his advances.

"Please tell him that I do not wish to see him," she begged the matron, and then it suddenly occurred to her that perhaps Gale had been sent by the *Daily News* in an official capacity to inform her that, in spite of that editorial, the paper was going to stand by her and do its utmost to help her prove her innocence.

"Perhaps, after all, I had better hear what he has to say," she said to the matron.

"I think it would be wise to do so," agreed that good woman. "He may have come to offer to do something for you, and I guess you can't afford to ignore any offers of help just now."

She unlocked the door of the cell, and conducted the camera girl to a room at the end of the corridor in which Gale, a keen-faced young man, and his companion, a middle-aged, flashily dressed man with a bloated face and a very red nose, were seated.

"Miss Hastings," exclaimed the reporter, rising and grasping both her hands impulsively, "I cannot find words to express how sorry I am to see you in this trouble. I——"

"Did Mr. Chapman send you here to see me?" she asked eagerly.

Gale smiled deprecatingly. "Chapman! I should say not, indeed. That old grouch doesn't even know that I'm here. I might as well tell you at the start, Miss Hastings, that if you are looking for any assistance from him, I'm afraid you're going to be disappointed. The paper has decided that it can't afford to be mixed up in this case at all."

"Then, why are you here?" she demanded, with a sigh of disappointment.

"What a question!" he exclaimed reproachfully. "Surely you didn't think, Miss Hastings—do you mind if I call you Ruth?—that I would see you in this unfortunate position without jumping in to help you. I am here, of course, as a friend, to offer you all the assistance in my power. I am determined to do my utmost to get you free, even though the *News* refuses to come to your rescue."

In spite of her instinctive prejudice against him, she could not help being touched by this evidence of loyalty. "That's very kind of you, Mr. Gale," she exclaimed gratefully.

"Don't mention it," he replied airily. "By the way, let me introduce my friend, Mr. Sugarman. I suppose you've heard of him, Ruth; he's one of the smartest criminal lawyers in New York."

The gentleman with the red nose held out a pudgy hand toward the girl. "Miss Hastings, I am delighted to meet you. Let me entreat you not to worry about the outcome of this affair. If you will put yourself entirely in my hands and do just as I tell you, like a good girl, I'll guarantee to get you out of this trouble all right."

"Do you mean—are you offering to represent me in court?" asked the girl.

The lawyer bowed.

"But I—I haven't any money, and can't afford to——"

"That's all right, Ruth," interrupted Gale, with a reassuring smile. "Mr. Sugarman is willing to take your case free of charge, as a favor to me."

The lawyer nodded. "Yes, I am under certain obligations to my friend Gale, and, since he has begged me so hard to come to your rescue, I am willing to offer my services gratis."

The camera girl turned gratefully to the reporter. "This is really very kind of you, Mr. Gale. I was wondering what I was going to do about a lawyer." Then she addressed Sugarman: "And do you really believe that you can get me free?"

"There's nothing to it," declared the lawyer confidently. "As I said before, if you'll do just as I tell you, you're as good as free already. A defense of emotional insanity——"

"Insanity?" gasped the camera girl.

Sugarman laughed. "Don't be scared, my dear; they won't send you to an asylum. I'll look out for that. We'll simply prove that you were out of your mind at the time—had a brain storm through brooding over your brother's fate in South Africa, you know. And then, when we've got you acquitted on those grounds, we'll proceed to prove that you are thoroughly sane again, now."

Gale nodded approvingly. "You can trust Mr. Sugarman, Ruth. He's a corker at insanity defenses. He'll be able to convince any jury that you were not in your right mind when you fired that shot at Lord Glaster."

"But I didn't shoot Lord Glaster," she protested indignantly. "And I'm not going to listen to any such plan. Do you think I would resort to such tactics even to win my liberty?"

The lawyer frowned. "Of course, my dear young lady, if you are going to be stubborn, I can't do anything for you. If you wish me to get you free, you must, as I said before, place yourself entirely in my hands."

"It is the only way, Ruth," declared the reporter earnestly. "An insanity plea is the only thing that can save you from a long term of imprisonment."

She turned upon him angrily. "Mr. Gale, let me ask you one question. Do you really believe that I am guilty of the attempt upon Lord Glaster's life?"

The reporter smiled knowingly. "To be quite candid with you, my dear

Ruth," he answered gently, "I am quite sure that you are. But I don't think any the worse of you for it. I don't blame you for feeling so bitter against Lord——"

He got no further. The camera girl pointed coldly toward the door. "Please leave at once—both of you," she panted. "I don't want to hear any more. I thank you for your kind offer of assistance, Mr. Sugarman, but I guess I won't trouble you to represent me in court. If there is no other way of obtaining my freedom, I prefer to remain in prison."

CHAPTER XXII.

AN INSPIRATION.

Gale made an attempt to argue the matter with the camera girl, but she refused to listen, and the two men finally went out, shaking their heads deprecatingly at the stubbornness and unreasonableness of the other sex.

Ten minutes after they had gone, the police matron came once more to the barred door of the camera girl's cell, and informed her that there were two more visitors outside.

"And one of them is the party you mentioned before," she added, with a smile. "I believe you said 'Hawley,' didn't you?"

"Yes!" exclaimed the girl eagerly. "Is he out there? Oh, please let me see him."

Once more she was taken from the cell, and conducted to the room at the end of the corridor, where the *Sentinel's* camera man greeted her cordially.

"Miss Hastings," he said, "I have come to introduce my friend, Mr. Robinson. He is a lawyer, and, if you will permit him, he will be very glad to represent you in court."

His companion, a quiet-looking young man, who was in every way a decided contrast to Mr. Sugarman, bowed his acknowledgment of this introduction.

"Before I accept this kind offer," said the girl, with a sad smile, "I must ask a question. On what lines does Mr. Robinson purpose to conduct my defense? Is he going to suggest emotional insanity or anything of that sort?"

"Why, of course not," replied Hawley, in a surprised tone. "Mr. Robinson is not going to offer any defense at all—because none will be necessary."

"I am here merely to represent you at the preliminary hearing in the magistrate's court this morning, Miss Hastings," explained the young lawyer. "As, of course, you will be remanded to await the action of the grand jury, there will be really nothing for us to do except attend to the matter of bail."

"Do you think you will be able to get me out on bail?" inquired the girl wistfully. "I have no relatives or friends who own property of any great value."

"In that case, Miss Hastings," said Hawley, "I regret to say that the chances are against us. I shall certainly do my best to get a bondsman for you, but I am afraid the magistrate will set the amount of your bail at such a high figure that it will be impossible to find anybody who can be persuaded to go on the bond.

"However," he went on cheerily, "don't you care! It's a rotten shame, of course, that you should have to spend even an hour in this wretched place, but—bail or no bail—you're not going to remain locked up for long. I am already on the trail of the fellow who fired that shot at Lord Glaster, and as soon as I've found him you'll be released, with apologies from Inspector McCartney and everybody who now believes you guilty."

"Already on his trail?" repeated the camera girl, in astonishment. "Surely you can't mean that, Mr. Hawley? Why, you don't know who he is, do you?"

"No, but I know what he looks like," answered the camera man, with a smile, "and that's a whole lot accomplished toward catching him, you know." He took the photograph of the bearded man from his pocket. "Maybe it would interest you to take a look at his picture."

"Is *that* the man?" exclaimed the

girl excitedly. "Why, he was standing right beside me when we were taking the wedding pictures outside the church. I remember that he requested me to move my camera a little to one side, so that he could get a better focus. But he seemed to be quite cool and collected, and I didn't notice anything at all suspicious about his actions before the shooting. What made you pick him out from all the rest as the guilty person, Mr. Hawley?"

The camera man explained to her in detail how and why he had arrived at that conclusion. Her eyes lighted up as she heard of his ingenious experiment with the flash-light picture, which had enabled him to pick out the impostor from the group of legitimate press representatives.

"That was very clever of you, Mr. Hawley," she said. "I feel quite sure now that you are on the right track, and I begin to have hope of getting out of this all right, in spite of the crushing mass of circumstantial evidence which Inspector McCartney will produce against me.

"But what do you think could have been this fellow's motive?" she inquired, pointing to the picture in Hawley's hand. "Have you any idea *why* he shot Lord Glaster!?"

"I don't believe that he meant to shoot Lord Glaster at all," replied the camera man quietly. "I have reason to believe that the shot he fired missed its mark."

"Missed its mark?" She looked at him wonderingly.

"Yes. Do you remember the infernal machine which was sent to Lord Destyn a few weeks ago, and the threatening letter which accompanied it? Well, I am quite sure that our bearded friend was the author of that violent warning.

"The bullet which sped from his camera was not intended for Lord Glaster, but for his cousin, Lord Destyn, who, as you know, was standing close beside Glaster when the shot was fired."

After a few moments of thought, the girl nodded. "Yes, I think you are right, Mr. Hawley. Indeed, now that you speak of it, it astonishes me that nobody else seems to have remembered about that infernal machine. I should think that the police and the newspapers would have connected it with the shooting immediately."

Hawley smiled. "I presume they would have done so if it hadn't been for your unfortunate prejudice against Lord Glaster. It was that fact which threw everybody off the track and caused them to lose sight of the warning-letter incident. The strong circumstantial evidence against you and the discovery that apparently you had a motive for assassinating Lord Glaster convinced Inspector McCartney and nearly everybody else that the bullet was really meant for the man it hit.

"I, on the other hand, being convinced of your innocence," he went on, "naturally sought elsewhere for a motive for the shooting, and it soon occurred to me that Lord Destyn and not his kinsman, Lord Glaster, was really the man marked for slaughter.

"As soon as this thought presented itself, I went at once to the district messenger office, from which that infernal machine had been sent, and showed the manager this picture, which, after some hesitancy, he identified as the photograph of the man who brought in the package.

"The reason he hesitated at first was that the fellow at that time was clean shaven. He must have grown that beard within the past few weeks. The manager was quite sure that it was the same man, however, but he could give me no information concerning his identity."

Ruth Hastings flashed him an admiring glance. "How clever you are, Mr. Hawley. You don't overlook a single point.

"I suppose," she went on, pointing to the photograph of the bearded man, "you are of the opinion that this man must be insane. Surely nobody but a dangerous maniac could be guilty of such a crime."

"Yes," agreed the camera man. "Although the manager of the messenger office says that the man acted rationally enough when he was in the place, I

think we shall find that we have a madman to deal with. We can't be too sure of that, though. It is quite possible that the man is sane and has a real grievance against Lord Destyn.

"He may be cunning enough to have sent that infernal machine and threatening letter in the hope that, after the shooting, they would direct suspicion from himself, by causing the police to conclude that the mysterious crime was the work of a crank."

"No," declared the girl, "I am confident that you will find the man is a maniac. Isn't there any way of finding out who he is, Mr. Hawley? How about the British consulate? You have not forgotten, I suppose, that on the wrapper of the infernal machine the words: 'From the British consulate' appeared in embossed type? Maybe if you inquired at the consulate, they could give you some information as to who he is."

Hawley smiled. "I have just come from there. The same idea suggested itself to me, so I went to the consulate the first thing this morning, showed them this photograph, and asked them if they could identify the man.

"Nobody there remembered ever having seen his face before. They explained that the printing on the package may have been cut from a letterhead, which he could easily have obtained without visiting the consulate. That sounds very plausible."

"Yes," she agreed. "But there's one other point, Mr. Hawley, which it seems to me is difficult to explain. If that bullet from the camera was really intended for Lord Destyn, why didn't the assassin, when he found that he had missed his mark and hit the wrong man—why didn't he fire again?"

"Maybe he got scared," suggested Hawley. "At all events——" He stopped short suddenly, and an expression of great excitement lighted up his features.

"By Jove! Miss Hastings, you've given me a great idea!" he cried joyously. "When I came here, I didn't have the slightest clew as to the present whereabouts of that whiskered assassin. I didn't know where to begin to look for him. But what you have just said has told me where to find him. Now, inside of forty-eight hours, I expect to be able to place my hand upon his shoulder and tell him that he is wanted. Come on, Robinson; we can't afford to lose a minute."

And without a word of explanation to the astonished camera girl, he hurried out, followed by his still more astonished friend, the counsel for the defense.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ON THE TRAIL.

"What in the name of all that's mysterious are you up to now, Hawley?" demanded Robinson, when the two men reached the street.

"Read that!" replied the impetuous camera man, laconically taking a folded newspaper from his pocket and pointing to a paragraph on the front page.

The lawyer took the paper, and saw that the paragraph which Hawley had indicated was part of the account of the shooting of Lord Glaster. With growing mystification, he read:

"Lord Destyn accompanied his stricken cousin to the hospital and waited there until assured by the surgeons that the bullet wound was not of a serious nature. Then he returned to the church, and the interrupted wedding was hurried through as fast as possible.'

"I don't see anything enlightening about this," remarked Robinson, looking up from the paper. "What has the fact that Lord Destyn was married after the shooting of his cousin got to do with finding the man you're after?"

"Read on," commanded Hawley. "The next few lines will answer your question. Read what it says about the honeymoon."

The lawyer turned once more to the newspaper:

"Satisfied that his kinsman's condition was not sufficiently serious to demand a change in the honeymoon plans, Lord Destyn and his bride left on the six-thirty train for Wiltingham, Joshua B. Blanchard's country home, their automobile being escorted to the railway station by a squadron of mounted police.

"The couple will spend three weeks on this magnificent estate, which Mr. Blanchard

has turned over entirely to them during their honeymoon."

Still Robinson looked at the camera man questioningly. "I must confess that your object in getting me to read all this continues to be as clear as mud to me, my friend," he said. "What on earth has it got to do with what you said to Miss Hastings just now? How is it going to help you to capture the man who shot Lord Glaster?"

"Don't you see?" exclaimed Hawley excitedly. "Lord Destyn has gone to Wiltingham, where he plans to stay for the next three weeks. Consequently the chances are a hundred to one that we will find our whiskered friend at Wiltingham, too."

"But why? What grounds have you for jumping at such a conclusion?"

"What grounds! Great guns, man! Doesn't it strike you as pretty straight dope that the fellow, having failed in his first attempt to shoot Lord Destyn, will naturally seek a second opportunity?"

"You think that he has followed his lordship out there in order to assassinate him?" exclaimed the lawyer.

"Of course I do. I am almost sure of it."

"But if he was not satisfied with the harm he had already done—if, after shooting Glaster, he still thirsted for Destyn's life," argued Robinson, "why didn't he fire a second shot from his camera immediately after the first? He had plenty of opportunity then."

Hawley shrugged his shoulders. "That is the very question which Miss Hastings asked me and which first put it into my head to look for our man at Wiltingham.

"It is impossible, of course, for me to tell you why he didn't fire more than one shot. As I said before, maybe he lost his nerve after seeing Lord Glaster fall, or perhaps he had never seen Lord Destyn before, and believed at the time that he had got the right man.

"At all events," the camera man went on, "whatever his reason, he didn't make a second attempt right then, and he didn't have an opportunity at any time afterward, for the bride and groom were so hemmed in by mounted police that it was impossible to get anywhere near them, and, besides, he was placed under arrest after the shooting and taken to headquarters with the rest of us camera men.

"Therefore, it is a safe bet that our whiskered friend has gone to Wiltingham, figuring that in that secluded spot he ought to be able to accomplish his infernal purpose. If we do not get there too late—if the wretch doesn't succeed in getting to Lord Destyn before we arrive, I mean—I am quite sure that we shall find him prowling around the estate waiting for a chance to send a bullet into the Englishman. There isn't a minute to lose, Robinson. We must leave for Wiltingham on the very next train."

"*We?*" exclaimed the lawyer uneasily. "You don't suppose for a minute, Hawley, that I'm going along with you?"

"Yes, you've got to come, old fellow. I shall probably need your help."

"But are you forgetting that I have been retained as counsel for Miss Hastings and have got to be in the magistrate's court to represent her this morning?"

"Let that go," declared the camera man confidently. "Miss Hastings will be able to get along all right without a lawyer. They can't do anything to her in court to-day, and by to-morrow we'll be back with the proof that will set her free."

"Well, anyway," declared Robinson, who was a somewhat timorous young man, "if you think I'm going out there on such a dangerous errand, my friend, you've got another guess coming.

"We know that that fellow has a gun, and we know also that he doesn't hesitate to shoot to kill. Your life may be worth nothing to you, Hawley, but mine is very dear to me."

"Bosh!" exclaimed the camera man impatiently. "There won't be any danger to speak of. I'm going to resort to strategy, if possible. In fact, I've got a bully plan mapped out already. You've got to come along, old chap, and help me put it through."

After a lot of persuasion, the young lawyer consented to go, his good nature overcoming his prudence.

On their way to the Grand Central Station, Hawley stepped into a sporting-goods store and purchased a box of blank cartridges to fit a twenty-two-caliber revolver.

"What on earth are those for?" demanded Robinson, staring at his companion in astonishment.

"They're part of the plan I've mapped out for the capture of our whiskered friend," was the only explanation the camera man would give him. "The chances are that we won't get an opportunity to use them, but I'm taking them along in case we do."

"What in the name of all that's mysterious is this plan of yours?" demanded the lawyer.

"Never mind," rejoined his friend, with an enigmatic smile; "I'm not going to let you in on it now. Wait until we get out there, and you'll see."

As they stepped out of the sporting-goods store, they encountered Gale, the *Daily News* reporter, and his friend, Lawyer Sugarman, who were walking through Forty-second Street.

"Hello, Hawley!" exclaimed the former, with an ironical grin. "Still looking for the man who shot Lord Glaster? My good friend, Inspector McCartney, was telling me last night that you've developed into a regular Sherlock Holmes."

Notwithstanding the sneer in the reporter's tone and the fact that he and the camera man were old enemies, the latter smiled pleasantly as he replied: "Praise from the inspector is praise indeed. I think, Gale, that if you'll invest a penny for a copy of the *Sentinel* to-morrow morning, you'll see in that up-to-date journal one of the biggest scoops that ever caused the *News* to turn green with envy."

"Is that so?" exclaimed the *News* man sharply. "Which is it going to be, picture or story scoop?"

"Both," replied Hawley, who had his camera in his hand—he rarely traveled without it even when off duty—"I expect to take a couple of snapshots to illustrate our story of the capture of Lord Glaster's would-be assassin—for I don't mind revealing to you that that's the scoop which the *Sentinel* is going to pull off to-morrow morning."

Gale burst into a hearty laugh. "By Jiminy! Hawley, I must confess that you had me quite worried for a couple of minutes. I almost took you seriously—for sometimes the sleepy old *Sentinel* does manage to fall into an exclusive yarn. So that's going to be your scoop, is it—the capture of Lord Glaster's assailant? I must hurry around and tell Inspector McCartney the stirring tidings. I guess he'll be interested to learn that your Sherlock Holmes methods have produced such amazingly quick results."

Hawley greeted this irony with another good-natured smile, and he and his companion continued on their way to the Grand Central Station.

As they neared that terminal, they met a tall, sharp-featured man, with iron-gray hair, whom Hawley greeted cordially.

"Hello, inspector!" he exclaimed joyously. "This is indeed a fortunate meeting. You're just the very man I want."

The man he addressed was Police Inspector Bryant. Hawley considered this man one of the most intelligent on the force, and he felt confident that he would not jeer when he heard of the errand on which the two young men were bound.

Hawley proceeded to narrate to the police official all that he had learned concerning the bearded man, and gave his reasons for assuming that they would find the fellow at Wiltingham.

Inspector Bryant listened to the recital with great and growing interest, and when it was finished placed his hand upon the camera man's shoulder.

"My friend!" he exclaimed enthusiastically, "you've done remarkably well. Until now I thought for sure that McCartney had that young woman dead to rights. The circumstantial evidence against her is so strong that I didn't think there could possibly be any mistake. But what you've told me puts a

new complexion on the case. I think you're on the right track."

"Then, come along with us, inspector, to Wiltingham, and help us to nab our man," said Hawley eagerly.

"Oh, no. I couldn't do that. It's out of my jurisdiction and——"

"But think of the fine opportunity to put one over on Inspector McCartney," suggested Hawley, who knew of the rivalry which existed between the two inspectors. "Can you imagine his face when you come marching into headquarters with the man who shot Lord Glaster handcuffed to you?"

A gleam came to the policeman's eyes. "By Jove! I think I'll do it. Not, of course, that I care particularly about rubbing it into Inspector McCartney," he added hastily, "but—well, no doubt you'll need me on the job."

The inspector, who was in citizen's clothes, was ready to start at once, and fifteen minutes later the three men were on a train speeding toward Wiltingham.

When, several hours later, they arrived at that small village, Hawley produced the photograph of the bearded man from his pocket and asked the station master whether he had ever seen the original.

"A fellow that looked something like him—only he didn't have no beard—got off the eleven-ten express this morning," was the encouraging reply. "He had a camera in his hand and——"

"That's he!" exclaimed the inspector excitedly, turning to Hawley. "He's taken the precaution of removing his whiskers. Do you know which way he went from here, friend?"

"The last I saw of him he was trudging up that there road toward the Blanchard estate," replied the station master, pointing over his shoulder. "Guess he went up there to try to take some snapshots of the bride and groom."

CHAPTER XXIV.

HAWLEY'S PLAN.

"Do you suppose we're too late?" exclaimed Robinson, turning anxiously to his two companions. "Do you think he's got to Lord Destyn already?"

"I don't think so," replied Hawley confidently. "It was several hours ago that he went up there, and if anything had happened to his lordship, I guess they'd surely have heard about it down here in the village by this time. He's probably still prowling around the place, looking for his chance. I know from personal experience that it's not an easy thing to get into these private estates."

"Nevertheless, we'd better not lose any time in getting up there," declared Inspector Bryant.

He turned to the station master. "How far is it to Mr. Blanchard's place from here?"

"About five miles, sir, and uphill most of the way."

"Can we get a rig?"

"Sure. You'll find one standing outside the depot right now."

Five minutes later the trio had made their bargain with the local hackman, and were driving toward the Blanchard estate as fast as the somewhat ancient steed could go.

"Seems to have been raining up here," remarked Hawley to the driver, noticing the muddy condition of the roads.

"Yes, sir. It's been pouring steadily all afternoon. Started before one, and only let up about an hour ago."

"Then I guess we're wasting our time driving up here," said the camera man, in an undertone to his companions. "That fellow arrived on the eleven-ten train, so he couldn't have got up to the Blanchard place much before one. When it began to rain hard, he probably figured that Lord Destyn would remain indoors, and consequently that it was no use waiting around up there to-day."

"Do you think he went back to New York?" inquired Robinson.

"No," said the inspector, "he wouldn't do that. That sort of a fellow'll wait around for days, if necessary, in order to get his man. The chances are that he went back to the village and has put up at the local hotel. We'll look him up there later, but, as long as we've started, we might as well

keep right on now up to the Blanchard place. Perhaps we shall be able to learn something about his movements from some of the employees there."

This surmise proved correct, for when they reached the lodge gates of the estate, and Hawley once more displayed the precious photograph, the lodgekeeper immediately recognized it as that of a man with a camera who had approached him early that afternoon and pleaded to be allowed to enter the grounds in order to take some snapshots.

"He didn't have a beard," said the lodgekeeper, "but I am quite sure it was the same feller. He told me he was a representative of a Chicago newspaper, and that he had been sent by his editor to get some pictures of the Blanchard estate. I told him, of course, that strangers weren't allowed on the grounds and that, anyway, Mr. Blanchard never permitted photographs to be taken. While he stood here arguing, it started to rain hard, and that drove him away."

"I guess we'll find him at the hotel, all right," declared Inspector Bryant confidently, as they climbed into the rig and returned to the village.

And when they drew up outside the Wiltingham Inn, the only hostelry the village boasted, and made whispered inquiries of the landlord, who stood in the doorway, they learned that their man was inside.

"He came in this morning, and took lunch here," said the hotel keeper. "Then he asked me how to get to Mr. Blanchard's place, and when I had directed him he went out, takin' his camera with him.

"He came back here a couple of hours ago, drenched to the skin, signed the register, and took a room on the second floor. He's up there now. I reckon he must have caught cold in the rain, for he's gone to bed, and he's asked for extra blankets, and called three times already for hot drinks."

The inspector consulted his watch. "It's now seven-thirty," he whispered to Hawley. "There'll be a train for New York in fifteen minutes. We can easily have our prisoner at the depot by then. Guess I'll go right upstairs and slip the handcuffs on him."

Hawley laid a detaining hand upon the policeman's arm. "Please don't do that, inspector. Wait until you hear my plan, and I think you'll agree that it will be better to let him remain here overnight."

He turned eagerly to the landlord. "How far away is your nearest doctor?"

"Only a short distance up the road you'll find old Doctor Perkins. He's the best physician in the county. Seven years ago when my old woman had lumbago——"

Hawley did not wait to hear this tribute to the local physician's skill. To the landlord's surprise and the still greater bewilderment of his two companions, the camera man darted away as if his life depended upon his reaching Doctor Perkins' office instantly.

When he returned, fifteen minutes later, his face wore a triumphant grin. "I've got it," he chuckled. "It was a hard job persuading that old sawbones to let me have it, but at last I succeeded in getting it."

"Succeeded in getting what?" growled Inspector Bryant impatiently.

"This sleeping powder," chuckled Hawley, holding up a small package. "Let's take a little walk up the road, while I explain my plan to both of you."

When Inspector Bryant heard Hawley's plan, he nodded approvingly. "A very clever idea, my boy," he said. "I agree with you that it will be much better to proceed that way than to place him under arrest immediately. We want to get as strong a case as possible against him."

They returned to the inn, and once more interviewed the landlord.

"Can you let us have a room next to that camera fellow upstairs?" inquired the inspector.

"Now, see here, gentlemen!" exclaimed the old man suspiciously; "this mysterious business has just about gone far enough. I'm running a highly respectable place here, and before I consent to take you in I've got to know

who you are and what all this hocus-pocus about that camera chap upstairs is about?"

The inspector drew back the lapel of his coat, and allowed the light of the oil lamp above the office counter to shine impressively upon a gold badge which was pinned to his vest.

At the sight of that emblem of authority, the landlord's manner underwent an immediate change. "Excuse me, sir," he said obsequiously. "I suspected as much, of course, but I wanted to make sure. Is that feller a desperate criminal, sir?"

"About as desperate as they come," replied the inspector grimly, for he saw that they could not hope to carry out their plan without taking the hotel keeper at least partially into their confidence. "He's more dangerous than a rattlesnake. Now, how about that room?"

"I can give you one adjoining his, sir, and there's only a thin partition between you two. You can hear every move he makes."

"Good!" exclaimed the inspector. "And we'll need a pass-key to his room, too. It may be necessary for us to jump in there in a hurry during the night."

As the landlord produced a key, a young man of rustic appearance, who served as clerk, bartender, bellhop, and assistant manager of the inn, came from the barroom bearing a tray, on which was a glass of some hot beverage.

"Is that for the camera man upstairs?" inquired Hawley.

"Yes, sir."

"Let me look at it a minute, will you?"

The young man stared at him suspiciously, but his employer reassured him. "It's all right, Lemuel; you do whatever these gentlemen tell you."

Hawley lifted the glass, and pretended to inspect it critically. "Only a hot sling, eh? Well, that won't hurt him. Fine thing for a cold."

As he replaced the glass in the tray, he allowed the contents of the little white package in the palm of his hand to fall to the bottom of the steaming liquor.

CHAPTER XXV.

HOW IT WORKED.

At ten-thirty that night, Inspector Bryant turned to his two companions. "Well, I guess there is nothing more to be done to-night," he said. "Everything is now in readiness for the big show to-morrow. You two might as well go to sleep."

"And how about you, inspector?" inquired Hawley. "Surely there's no need for you to wait up, now that everything's been attended to."

"Well, I guess I'm going to remain on guard all night," replied the policeman. "While I don't think there's much chance of our gentleman recovering from the effects of that sleeping powder before morning, still, I don't believe in taking any chances in a case like this.

"It's just possible, you know, that, in spite of that powder, he may wake up during the night, become suspicious, discover what we have done, and undo all our work. Therefore, I'd better keep my eye pretty close to that hole in the partition until morning."

"We'll take turns at watching, then," insisted the camera man. "That's only fair. You or Robinson take the first watch, inspector, for I've got some personal business downstairs. I'll be back soon."

Without explaining to the other two what he intended to do, Hawley went downstairs to the deserted hotel office, and located the long-distance telephone on the wall.

"Hello, central!" he said softly; "give me New York in a hurry, please. I want to talk to the New York *Sentinel*."

Five minutes later he was talking to the night city editor of the *Sentinel*, and trying his best to convince that suspicious gentleman that he, Hawley, was perfectly sober and in full possession of all his mental faculties.

"I tell you, we've got the real assassin—or, at least, the would-be assassin—of Lord Glaster right here,"

he cried. "Yes, of course, I'm sure of what I'm telling you. . . . No, he hasn't been placed under arrest as yet —we're saving that until to-morrow— but there's no chance of his getting away. Inspector Bryant is right here with me. He's watching our man upstairs through a hole in a partition, while I'm telephoning. Yes, we've got the story absolutely exclusive. We'll scoop the town with it. . . . Pictures? I'll take snapshots to-morrow, of course, of the arrest when it comes off, but in the meantime, if you'll send upstairs to the photo-engraving room, McPherson will give you an enlarged photograph of the assassin which he made for me. He's got the plate and can run you off a print."

Hawley remained talking over the long-distance wire for thirty minutes, for after the night city editor got through a rewrite man came to the telephone and took from Hawley, in detail, what the editor had received in brief outline.

"Crackajack yarn!" was the rewrite man's comment when Hawley had finished. "Congratulations, old fellow!"

When the camera man returned to his companions upstairs, the inspector looked at him suspiciously. "Telephoning, weren't you?" he asked sharply.

"Yes."

"To whom, may I ask? Not to your paper, I hope?"

"Yes," replied Hawley, somewhat sheepishly. "I had to give them the story, you know, inspector."

The policeman glared at him. "I thought you had more sense, my friend. You've probably spoiled everything by that break. If that fellow in the next room learns to-morrow morning through your paper that——"

"He can't," interrupted Hawley. "I took good care to guard against that, of course. We're going to use the story only in our city edition. The news can't get out here until long after he's under arrest."

"It can't, eh!" growled the inspector. "Well, suppose he's got friends in the city who know he's out here and what he's come for. They'll buy a *Sentinel* early to-morrow morning, and as soon as they read your story they'll telegraph him a warning, and all this night's work will have been for nothing. How about that?"

"Gee! I didn't think of that," said the camera man, staggered by this possibility. "I'm awfully sorry, inspector. I felt that I just couldn't stand by and see the *Sentinel* lose such a bully scoop. If I'd waited until to-morrow, all the other papers would have had the story, you know."

"Oh, well, now that it's done, it's no use talking about it, I guess," grumbled the policeman. "Let's hope that the fellow has no friends in New York who'll tip him off and spoil our little surprise, that's all."

Apparently the sleeping man in the adjoining room had no such friends, for when he arose the next morning and went downstairs to breakfast, although it was after nine o'clock, no telegrams or communications of any sort awaited him.

Quite unaware of the arrival of Hawley and his two companions and of their interest in his movements, he left the inn after breakfast, and, camera in hand, trudged up the hilly road toward the Blanchard estate.

As he approached the lodge gates, the lodgekeeper, who, on the previous day, had firmly denied him admission to the grounds, now nodded pleasantly to him, and said: "You are lucky to have persisted in making a second attempt, my friend. Since I turned you down yesterday, there has been a change of orders here. Lord Destyn this morning told me that he had no objection to newspaper men entering the grounds to take snapshots. Therefore, you can come right in if you want to."

An eager glint came to the eyes of the man with the camera. "Maybe Lord Destyn won't mind posing for a picture himself," he said. "The newspaper I represent would very much like to have a snapshot of him and his lady —yes, very much indeed."

"Maybe he wouldn't object," said the lodgekeeper, with an encouraging smile. "Why don't you ask him?

You'll find him and Lady Destyn over at the lake, feeding the swans."

The man with the camera, without uttering another word, hurried through the gate and along several paths until his eager eyes discovered the lake ahead, and a tall, soldierly man and a young woman standing on the banks, laughingly throwing bread crumbs to a dozen beautiful swans.

With an exclamation of excitement, the man with the camera quickened his pace almost to a run, and advanced toward them.

A few feet away from the couple he suddenly stopped, raised his camera, and appeared to take careful focus.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Lord Destyn, in a loud voice, "look at that chap, my dear! He's going to take our pictures, eh, what?"

His lordship stood perfectly still, and so did Lady Destyn, but there was a strained, anxious look on her face, and she grasped her husband's hand tightly.

Suddenly there came a loud report, a flash of flame, a curl of smoke from the camera's lens, and—Lord Destyn broke into a loud laugh.

An exclamation of astonishment came from the lips of the man with the camera. There was another report from the interior of his photographic apparatus, a second flash, and once more a laugh from the perfectly cool and uninjured nobleman.

And then three men sprang out from behind a clump of bushes, and the baffled assassin dropped his camera, and struggled frenziedly in their grasp.

Something flashed in the sunlight, there was a sharp click, and the surprised man was a handcuffed prisoner.

"Got him safe, gentlemen, have you?" exclaimed Lord Destyn, chuckling as he walked toward them. "Let's look at the murderous beggar."

CHAPTER XXVI.

A DANDY SNAPSHOT.

Early that morning, Inspector Bryant had gone to the Blanchard estate and sought an interview with Lord Destyn, leaving his two companions behind at the inn to keep a secret watch on the murderous camera man.

Lord and Lady Destyn were at breakfast when the policeman's card was brought in to them, but the few hastily penciled words on the back caused his lordship to instruct the servant to admit the inspector immediately.

In a few concise sentences, the latter explained the situation, outlined his plan—or rather Hawley's plan—and asked the nobleman's coöperation.

"But what do you want me to do?" his lordship had inquired.

"Stand up before the fellow's camera, and allow him to take a shot at you, your lordship," was the grim reply.

"Eh, what? Surely you must be joking, my dear chap?"

"No, your lordship. I am perfectly serious. Let me assure you that there will not be the slightest danger. We have taken the precaution of removing the cartridges from the fellow's gun, and, unbeknown to him, of course, putting blank cartridges in their place."

"By Jove! A deucedly clevah idea, I think!" exclaimed the Britisher admiringly. "You're a smart chap, inspector. They need a man like you at Scotland Yard."

"The idea wasn't mine, sir," replied the policeman candidly. "It was the young newspaper man who is with me that thought of the whole thing, and who sneaked into the fellow's room during the night and changed the cartridges in the gun."

"A very clever idea, whoever thought of it," repeated Lord Destyn. "Now that I know that I shan't be killed, I shall be glad to help you as you suggest, inspector."

"Thank you. There is one more favor I'd like to ask of your lordship. Will you please instruct your lodge-keeper to admit this fellow to the grounds when he comes on his pretended errand to take pictures?"

Lord Destyn readily promised to attend to this detail, and thus the trap for the would-be assassin was carefully prepared.

Now that it had worked so successfully, the inspector, with the strug-

gling prisoner handcuffed to him, turned admiringly to the nobleman.

"Allow me to congratulate your lordship upon your nerve," he said. "I guess there aren't many men who would face a gun as unflinchingly as you did, sir, even though assured that the bullets had been removed and blank cartridges substituted."

"And allow *me* to thank you, sir," put in Hawley, "for lending yourself to this little ruse, and thereby enabling us to prove conclusively that this fellow fired the shot which hit Lord Glaster."

"But why did he do it?" cried the new Lady Destyn half hysterically. "What could be his motive for such an outrageous crime?"

Inspector Bryant turned sternly to the prisoner. "Come, cut out that struggling, my man. It isn't going to do you any good. Be still and tell us why you sought Lord Destyn's life."

"Because," answered the prisoner, his steely eyes snapping, "the cursed Englishman has stolen from me the girl whom I love more than life itself."

"Just as I suspected. He's as crazy as a loon!" muttered the inspector.

Lady Destyn stared in astonishment at him, and then gave vent to an excited cry. "Why, I recognize him now. He's the crazy photographer who annoyed me several years ago when I was at boarding school by sending me love letters and following me on the streets. Father had him sent to an asylum. I wonder how he got out?"

Hawley eagerly addressed the unfortunate man. "Will you confess that you shot Lord Glaster the other day?" he asked.

"Yes, I shot him, but I didn't mean that bullet for him. It was intended for Lord Destyn," replied the madman. "I didn't know which one was Destyn, and I shot the wrong man."

"By Jove!" exclaimed his lordship, with a laugh, "I have always been horribly afraid of cameras, you know, but after this I shall be more scared of 'em than ever."

With a look of mock alarm, he pointed to the camera in Hawley's hand. "Haven't got a bullet concealed in that, have you, old chap, eh, what?"

"No, sir," chuckled Hawley, "but there's a dandy snapshot inside, of your lordship facing this fellow's camera. I got a good picture as he fired those blank cartridges at you. It'll be another bully scoop for the *Sentinel*. This sure is my lucky day!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE TRIUMPHANT RETURN.

There was a frown of anxiety upon the sour countenance of Chapman, city editor of the *Daily News*, as he sat staring at a headline on the front page of the *Sentinel's* city edition.

This headline, which extended from margin to margin, was as follows:

RUTH HASTINGS INNOCENT OF GLASTER SHOOTING.

MAN WHO FIRED BULLET FROM CAMERA FOUND BY "SENTINEL."

BRILLIANT DETECTIVE WORK OF FRANK HAWLEY, OF "SENTINEL'S" STAFF, UNEARTHS WOULD-BE ASSASSIN, NOW UNDER SURVEILLANCE, WHO WILL BE ARRESTED TO-DAY BY POLICE INSPECTOR BRYANT.

"Suffering Cæsar!" muttered Chapman. "If this is true, it's the worst walloping the *News* has received in ten years. We'll be the laughingstock of the whole town if it really turns out that that girl is innocent." He swung around in his revolving chair, and yelled to an office boy: "Where's Mr. Gale?"

"He hasn't come in yet, sir."

"Confound that fellow! He's never around when he's wanted," growled the irascible city editor. "Ah! Here he is now." He glared at the reporter, who advanced smilingly toward his desk, a folded newspaper protruding from his coat pocket.

"Suppose you've seen the *Sentinel* this morning?" snapped Chapman.

"Yes," replied Gale imperturbably, patting his coat pocket. "Got one right here. What do you think of it, sir?"

"Think of it! If that story is true——"

"Pooh! There's no chance of that,"

declared the reporter confidently. "It's true enough, no doubt, that that fellow Hawley has located the man with the whiskers, whose picture ornaments the *Sentinel's* front page, but as for his being the would-be assassin of Lord Glaster, why, that's all bosh. There isn't any doubt in my mind that Ruth Hastings fired that shot from the camera, and all the Hawleys in the world couldn't convince me to the contrary."

"Well, I hope you're right," grunted the city editor, somewhat reassured by the reporter's confident tone. "You'd better run over right away and see your friend, Inspector McCartney. Ask him what *he* thinks of this confounded *Sentinel* scoop."

"I'll go if you say so, boss," said Gale, "but it's really a waste of time. I know very well what the inspector'll think of it. He's got too much sense to be worried by such piffle as that."

As soon as Gale stepped out of the *News* office, however, his self-confident manner abruptly left him. As a matter of fact, his air of nonchalance had been merely a pose. He was a great deal more worried than he cared to confess by what he had read in the *Sentinel.*

He was too good a newspaper man not to realize the strength of the case which Hawley had built up against the fake representative of the Chicago *Record,* every detail of which was given in the *Sentinel's* sensational story.

As the story did not mention anything, however, about the madman's arrest and confession—for those things, of course, had not come to pass at the time the city edition had gone to press—Gale still had hope that Hawley might be in error.

"He's made out a pretty good case, I must admit," he said to himself, as he hurried toward police headquarters, "but, after all, it's only circumstantial evidence, and there's just as much of that against Ruth Hastings as there is against the fellow with the whiskers. Guess I'm not ready to eat crow just yet."

He was still further encouraged by his interview with Inspector McCartney, chief of the detective bureau.

That gruff official had been so busy all that morning that he had not yet had a chance to look at a newspaper, and he gazed with great interest at the copy of the *Sentinel* which the reporter handed him.

Then he snorted contemptuously. "So they imagine they've found the real assassin, do they? Well, you can bet your bottom dollar, my friend, that they've got another guess coming. That young smart Aleck, Hawley, makes me sick. Why don't he stick to his camera job and leave detective work to them that understands it? I'll bet he'll find himself out of a job as a result of this brain storm of his. His paper will fire him for sure when they find out what monkeys he's made out of 'em."

"Then you really don't think, inspector, that there's any chance of our being wrong and his being right?" exclaimed the reporter anxiously.

"Not a chance in the world. You go back and tell your city editor not to worry. I'll stake my reputation as a detective that we've got the Hastings girl right."

"I'm mighty glad to hear you say so, inspector," declared the reporter.

McCartney looked at him quizzically. "Say, Gale, you're a queer sort of a fellow. The other day you was tellin' me that you're stuck on that camera girl and hated to see her in this trouble. Now, you're glad to hear me say that she's guilty."

The reporter smiled. "I *am* stuck on Ruth, inspector, and, personally, I'd be mighty glad to see her escape going to prison. But with me, my paper comes first. You see, the *Daily News* has taken such a strong stand on this case that it would be most humiliating for us to have to admit that we've made a mistake. If, on the other hand, the *Sentinel's* scoop turns out to be a fizzle, they'll be the joke of the town, which, of course, would be a mighty good thing for the *News.* That's why I'm glad to hear you say that there's no chance of Hawley being right, inspector."

McCartney smiled sapiently. "Sure there ain't still another reason, Gale? Your loyalty to your paper does you credit, but ain't you thinking some, too, that if Hawley succeeded in getting the girl free, he'd stand aces high with her, and you wouldn't have any show? Isn't that part of the reason why you'd rather see the girl go to prison than be proved innocent—by that camera chap?"

The flush that came to the reporter's face told the policeman that he had hit the mark. With a chuckle, he went on: "Well, don't you worry, Gale. By the time her case comes to trial, the girl will have changed her mind about not caring to put up an insanity plea. After a few more days in a cell, she's bound to realize that it's her only chance of saving herself from prison, and then she'll send for you and be mighty glad to have your friend, Lawyer Sugarman, take her case. That'll put you 'way ahead of Hawley in her favor. By that time, she'll look upon him as a has-been and a four-flusher."

So little worried was Inspector McCartney by what he had read in the *Sentinel* that when, two hours later, Inspector Bryant entered his private office, accompanied by Hawley, Robinson, and their prisoner, the chief of the detective bureau grinned good-humoredly at the group.

"Welcome to our city, gentlemen," he remarked ironically. "Hope you ain't fatigued by your long train ride."

"Not at all, inspector," replied Hawley. "By the way, my size is six and three-eighths."

McCartney stared at him in bewilderment. "What do you mean?" he growled.

"Surely you have not forgotten that new hat you bet me?"

McCartney's red face broke into a grin. "Oh, that! Well, you ain't won it yet, my friend. Or, at least, if you have, you've got to show *me*."

"I can easily do that," replied Hawley. "Our prisoner has confessed that he shot Lord Glaster."

The big policeman's face turned a shade more red. "Huh!" he grunted incredulously. "Why did he shoot him?"

Hawley tapped his forehead significantly.

At that sign, a gleam of satisfaction came to McCartney's eyes. "Bughouse, eh?" he sneered. "Well, if that's the case, his confession ain't going to do you a bit of good. An insane person won't be allowed to testify against himself in court."

"We shan't need his confession," declared Inspector Bryant. "Thanks to this gentleman, here," placing his hand on Hawley's shoulder, "we've got enough evidence to satisfy any judge that it would be an injustice to hold Miss Hastings any longer."

Ruth Hastings was set free a few hours after Inspector Bryant and his party arrived at police headquarters with their prisoner.

Hawley was the first to take her hand and congratulate her upon her vindication, but when she attempted to thank him he hurriedly cut her short.

"There's one question I want to ask you, Miss Hastings," he said, seeking to change the subject. "How would you like to work for the *Sentinel?*"

"For the *Sentinel?*" she repeated, in astonishment.

"Yes, one of our camera men left suddenly yesterday, and there's a vacancy on our staff. I've spoken for the job for you, and it's yours if you want it."

"I shall be glad to have it," she said. "Of course I couldn't go back to the *News* after the way they've treated me."

A week later Hawley met Inspector Bryant on Broadway. The police official grabbed his hand effusively. "My friend, let me congratulate you all over again on the great work you did on that Glaster case," he cried. "I don't know whether you're aware of it, Hawley, but you're a positive genius. You ought to give up newspaper work, and become a detective. Why don't you join the force and get appointed to the detective bureau?"

"Not while our friend McCartney is the boss down there," laughed the camera man. "I guess he wouldn't enjoy seeing me around."

"But haven't you heard the news?" said the policeman, with a joyous smile. "There's been a shake-up at headquarters. McCartney leaves the bureau tomorrow to take charge of the traffic squad, and I'm to step into his shoes as chief of detectives.

"And I'm perfectly serious, Hawley, in urging you to join the force. If you'll get appointed, I'll promise you that you'll be made a first-grade detective immediately. Come, how about it?"

Hawley laughed, and glanced down at the camera in his hand. "No, thank you, inspector," he said. "I appreciate your kindness in making me this offer, and I love detective work—but—oh, you camera!"

THE END.

The Next Town

By Oliver Teak

Story of a young theatrical manager's conflict with a rival attraction that did not fight fair

JACK BRANDYCE stared bitterly at the letter in his hand. At the top was printed the name of a theatrical syndicate in New York, at the bottom the signature of the old friend who had been his sponsor when he obtained a position with that firm three months earlier. The letter ran:

"For Heaven's sake, do something to boost the receipts of 'The Master.' Only yesterday the chief told me that the home office's income from your show has not been large enough to detect with the naked eye. That means he is worrying about the show being in charge of as young a man as you. Of course I cheered him up about that. Now you must back me up. I know that dollar bills are as scarce as blue moons in most of your towns just now. But you've got to charm what few there are into your box office just the same. Your show is worth double its price. Get that fact into the newspapers somehow. That's your job, you know. Buck up, old man."

Brandyce looked out of his hotel window at two posters across the street. One announced "The Master," his own enterprise, a play of deep appeal; a train of chorus girls danced across the other expanse of paper, holding on their huge hats an object that had the red body and claws of a huge shellfish and the face and vacant smile of a stage-door Johnny. It was the poster of "The Girl and the Lobster."

Below each display of colored ink appeared the same date. Both companies were to appear in town on the following night in the only two theaters the place afforded. Before one poster stood a group of smirking men, while only two women and a dog took interest in "The Master" announcement.

Nothing could have illustrated Brandyce's situation better than that scene. He got up, strode to the telephone booth in the lobby, and called up Missouri City's second hotel.

"Is Mr. Simon Fields in?" he asked.

"Manager of the 'Girl and the Lobster'?"

'Yes. Will you ask him to step over to the Imperial Hotel and see Jack Brandyce?"

Fields, a small, shifty-eyed man, with a crooked smile, appeared in half an hour.

"Hello, young fellow! How's business?" he said, grinning offensively.

"Oh, as good as anybody's, I guess," said Jack. "But wouldn't it be better

if we didn't tread on each other's heels all over this State? Here we have been showing in the same town almost every night for three weeks and cutting each other's business in two. There is plenty of room for both shows out here if we'll only be sensible. Can't we come to an understanding?"

Sim Fields grinned again. Well he knew it was Jack's foot that the shoe was pinching, not his own. His girl show was almost sure to draw the bulk of the patronage away from a serious play in the Western small towns on their route.

"How long you been in the business?" he said, with a chuckle. "Don't you know that we can't jump around just as we like with a show, as if the route wasn't all mapped out for us before we start? There's the arrangements with the local theaters to consider."

Brandyce knew that both of them had been sent out to pick up what money they could in that territory without regard to red tape. Already he had canceled several dates on his own responsibility, accepting more advantageous offers elsewhere. He knew that Sim was doing likewise.

"Suppose we forget all that and do what we can for our receipts," he said. "Any report we send back to New York will be acceptable, so long as the financial column is right. You know that as well as I do."

Sim feigned great astonishment.

"You're a fine one to send out with a show," he sneered. "You've got to obey orders in this business, bo. I'll keep on just as I intended to, and I shouldn't wonder if we hit the same towns right along for some time. If you haven't got your orders from New York, I have."

His last words rang in Jack's head. "Orders from New York!" Sim Field was employed by the bitterest rivals of Bradley & Sullivan, his own concern. Was this systematic destruction of his profits by "The Girl and the Lobster" only one move in the theatrical war that the two syndicates were waging so bitterly.

Jack got up from his chair, a glitter in his eyes.

"Very well, then, it's a fight," he said quietly. "And remember, I'm in it to stay."

"Ye'll stay until ye get tripped up—no longer," retorted Field, with his crooked smile, and he took himself off.

Jack looked out at the billboards. The glaring "Lobster" poster still had more than its share of admirers. "The Master" bill was deserted. He sat down to write his report for the week to the home office. There was a wry twist in the corner of his mouth as he thought how it would finish his shaky reputation with Bradley & Sullivan. After deducting only absolutely necessary expenses, the firm's profit for the week amounted to exactly eighty cents. It was the worst week yet since the management of the company had fallen on his shoulders. He had been engaged to do only the press work—attend to the business of getting notices in the newspapers, etc., but the illness of the manager, who had gone back to New York, left Brandyce in charge of the company.

II.

Almira was the next town on the route of "The Master." Almira was the last hope. It was a prosperous little city, with a flourishing university in the outskirts, whose teachers and students "The Master" was more than likely to attract. Jack Brandyce knew that the only theater in the place would hold an audience large enough to stave off ruin. Two crowded performances would mean the beginning of prosperity again.

Jack reached Almira the day before the performance, traveling with the company. As he got off the train, a bill poster was at work across the street. At first he thought it was the "paper" of his own play, but in a second he recognized the giddy damsels of "The Girl and the Lobster."

"On my trail again," he muttered, as he sped past the signboard with his suit case. "Well, Sim Fields must be

going to open the 'Lobster' in a tent this time. There's only one theater in this town, and that's ours for to-morrow night. And I've got a day and a half left for a campaign with the newspapers."

The manager of the Almira Opera House greeted him with a worried look. As soon as he could get away from his other visitors, he took Jack into the lobby of the theater, and buttonholed him. There was trouble in his eye.

"Awfully sorry, old man," he said, "but I'm up a tree. I've had a poor run of attractions lately and slim receipts. To tell you the truth, I've got to make good on my finances here before the end of the week or give up my lease. Mr. Fields, of 'The Girl and the Lobster,' dropped in yesterday, and offered me the biggest guarantee I've ever had to turn over the house to his show to-morrow night. Now, couldn't you put off your date for a few days? Or, of course, if you could match his guarantee! Rather have a high-class play like yours here, you know. But no one holds to bookings very strictly out in this part of the country, and we——"

Just here, before Jack could protest—put up a fight to save his engagement—the manager was interrupted by a veiled young woman asking for her mail. She was Dorothy Madison, leading woman of "The Master." Jack introduced her to the manager. Miss Madison bowed without speaking, and turned away quickly, but beckoned to Brandyce from the doorway.

"May I see you at the hotel as soon as possible?" she said. "I have something important to tell you."

The manager craned his neck to look again at the actress.

"What did you say that lady's name is?" he asked curiously. "It isn't Blaisdell, is it?"

"Madison," answered Brandyc shortly.

Making another appointment to see the manager, Jack hurried away to learn what was up in the company. Several members of the cast had been receiving only half salaries recently, and he feared a demand for money. He found Dorothy Madison sitting on a trunk in her room, looking much distressed.

"Mr. Brandyce, I want you to release me from my contract, if you can," she said nervously, as if she had been screwing up her courage for hours to make the request.

Jack stared at her. Dorothy Madison was twice as popular and three times as clever as any other member of his company.

"I haven't told you that I hoped to go to Europe next year to study singing," she went on. "It has been my dream for years, and if this season had been a good one I should have saved enough money. But I know our business has been bad, and—well, the entire company is afraid you can't pay even a part of the salaries much longer. And then—then, yesterday Mr. Simon Fields offered me twice the money I've been getting to play the *Girl* in 'The Girl and the Lobster.'"

Brandyce gave a low whistle. Simon Fields again! And back of Fields, Jack was certain, stretched the long arm of his warlike managers on Broadway, to whom no tactics were too contemptible. He found it hard to think of wholesome Dorothy Madison as the painted and powdered *Girl,* and his face showed it.

"Oh, I know, it's not my kind of a part," she said, "but an actress who knows her business ought to be able to play anything. And this is not for always, I hope. Besides, a salary is a salary."

Brandyce was silent.

"Mr. Fields wanted me to open here to-morrow night. But I won't appear in that kind of a play in Almira. I want to leave here to-night, and wait for them in the next town."

"Why won't you appear in Almira?"

Dorothy said nothing for a moment. Then painfully, as if the subject hurt her, she said:

"I don't want to be seen here at all. I came with 'The Master' only because I thought there was no way out. As for appearing on that stage in fleshings,

I'd rather die. You see, my father lives here."

Slowly the young actress told him her story. Five years before she had left home to study singing in New York against her father's commands. Poverty and struggle had driven her to acting as a means to get funds for singing lessons in Europe later on. After her first year in New York, her father had stopped writing her to come home. She loved him still, but after their long quarrel she was too proud to go to him of her own will. "Since my mother died, he has been a very stern man," she said. Accepting Fields' offer meant the coveted trip to Europe, and eventually, Dorothy hoped, fame and fortune. The bare chance was bigger to the ambitious girl than anything in the world.

"May I ask your father's name?" said Brandyce.

"Doctor Henry T. Blaisdell," she admitted. "He is president of Almira University."

Jack started. He had heard of Doctor Blaisdell. For some moments his mind worked on the problem. Then he stood up, and held out his hand to the girl.

"If you will not give Fields his final answer until late this afternoon," he said, "I think I can release you from any engagement that you—well, that you want to be released from."

"Willingly," she said.

"One thing more. You say that you turned down Fields' offer at first—rejected it for your father's sake, and that you put that refusal in writing?"

"Yes."

"May I have the letter if I can find it?"

"Of course, if you want it."

For the next half hour, Brandyce scoured the hotels in search of Sim Fields. At the last one he entered, he was told that at three o'clock Sim had inquired the way to Doctor Henry T. Blaisdell's residence, and had got on a car going in that direction.

"Going to beat me to it, eh?" muttered Brandyce. "Well, I guess it isn't too late, Simon. I'll have a shot at it, anyway."

He jumped on the next trolley car, and in twenty minutes was at Doctor Blaisdell's gate.

III.

After a long time, a frightened maid answered Jack's ring. As the door opened, Jack heard an angry voice inside, and he understood that the cause of the girl's fright lay somewhere down the dark hall behind her.

The maid was too paralyzed with fear either to let Brandyce in or keep him out. So he marched straight past her. Just as he reached the library door, she plucked him by the sleeve and whispered: "Don't go in there."

But Jack's hand was already on the knob, and he turned it. A tall, powerfully built man with white hair was leaning over his library table talking in furious tones to little Sim, who, backed against a bookcase, faced the outpour with a sickly grin.

The hand of the master of the house had just closed about a heavy inkwell in front of him. A second more, and he would have hurled it at Sim's head. But with the opening of the door, the old gentleman's arm relaxed, and he half turned to the newcomer without abating his flow of words.

"This man has told me," he cried, "that my daughter—my only child—is to become a dancer in a play about a chorus girl and a—a—a lobster. The ignominy of it! I think he has come here only to taunt me. He wants me to talk for the newspapers. I would rather be in the grave myself and see Dorothy in hers than to countenance such a step on her part. She has not written to me in three years, but I believed that she had never forgotten who she is. Are you a reporter, sir?" he asked, looking fully at Jack for the first time. "Has this man set the reporters on me already?"

Before Jack could speak, Sim Fields broke in.

"Him!" he cried. "Why, he's the fellow that's responsible for your

daughter bein' down and out! He's been bamboozlin' her with the idea that she ought to stick with a worthless show that can't draw no audiences and has hard work to pay even half salaries! No wonder she's comin' to a first-class organization that will keep bread and butter in her mouth. Just as if any lady couldn't wear a blond wig and tights!"

Doctor Blaisdell shrank under this description of his daughter. Brandyce did not change his easy posture against the library table, but turned his cool, unwavering gaze toward Sim.

"Fields is lying, and he knows it," he said, keeping his eyes on Sim's face and addressing Doctor Blaisdell. If you will excuse a little quick action, sir, I think I can prove——"

In the middle of the sentence, Jack bounded to the other side of the room, and had one hand on a bulging pocket in Sim's coat before the sneering, crooked smile had quite gone from Sim's face. Sim wriggled like an eel, but he saved only one button of his coat. Two others went spinning across the room toward Doctor Blaisdell as Jack's sinewy hand emerged with a bunch of crumpled letters.

With his arms high in the air above the frenzied Sim, Jack went through the packet. Third from the top he found an envelope addressed in Dorothy's handwriting. The others he flung down toward the floundering and protesting Fields.

"This, I think, is your daughter's answer to Mr. Fields, rejecting his offer of an engagement," said Brandyce. "I have her permission to get it. It will decide any doubts you may have about Mr. Fields' veracity."

The old professor, who had been no nearer than the grand stand of a football field to such a scrimmage for years, felt the fighting blood that was still alive in him surge to his temples. He reached for Dorothy's letter with trembling hands, and hastily read it aloud.

"My Dear Mr. Fields: Thank you for your kind offer, but I could not appear in 'The Girl and the Lobster' in Almira under any circumstances. My father lives there, and although I have not seen him for years, I am much attached to him, and do not wish to be seen in his home in a rôle that he would not understand or care for. Your offer of double my present salary to join you later on is a great temptation, but as I have no experience in singing and dancing parts, I fear I must say no.

"Very truly yours,

"Dorothy Madison."

Doctor Blaisdell looked up from the note toward Fields with eyes that were dangerously alight. Jack expected the inkpot to find its mark now. And Sim seemed to have given up his game, for he glanced nervously toward the door.

"Your daughter, of course, has never consented to play the *Girl*—certainly not in Almira," Jack explained. "Fields' visit here is only one of the contemptible press-agent tricks that he knows better than anybody else in the business. He has tried to get you to air your distress in the newspapers on the bare chance that your daughter would join him later. He knows that there is no better advertising for his kind of a show than scandal. Its truth or falsity makes little difference."

Doctor Blaisdell roared out a command to Fields to leave his house. And to save delay, Brandyce took the spluttering fellow by the shoulders, and rushed him through the house to the porch outside. Then Simon departed, muttering threats.

IV.

Brandyce went back into the house, and knocked at the door of Doctor Blaisdell's study. For several seconds there was no answer. Then a muffled voice bade him come in. The old gentleman turned to him eyes that were moist, and said sadly:

"Can you tell me where to find my daughter? I want to see her more than anything in the world. She has been without her father's love too long."

"Your daughter is still leading woman of 'The Master' company," said Jack evenly. 'I hope she will remain so. And she will, if——"

"'The Master!' Edward Farnsworth's great play?" Doctor Blaisdell's shaggy eyebrows were lifted. "Why,

that was published in book form a year ago. I wrote then to thank the author for giving that sort of a play to the public. I asked several of my faculty to write also."

"I know that," continued the young manager. "I have had your name in my notebook ever since I left New York as one of the eminent men who had praised the play publicly. And it happens to rest with you now, Doctor Blaisdell, whether Almira shall ever see 'The Master,' and whether Dorothy Blaisdell shall continue to play in it."

The old professor's face was a study. His daughter was acting in a play that he himself knew, admired, and had helped to push forward. And she was near him—in Almira! When he spoke again, it was in a voice from which harshness had gone utterly.

For ten minutes, the old college president and the young man conferred. Then Doctor Blaisdell put on his hat, and, with Brandyce, walked rapidly across the town toward Dorothy's hotel.

V.

"The Master" opened in Almira the following night. Jack had been able to hand to the manager a money guarantee that his performances would draw business equal at least to Sim Fields' prospects. The check was signed by Henry Thomas Blaisdell.

Two Almira papers printed next morning the tribute to "The Master" that Doctor Blaisdell had written for publication long before. The president also wrote to his college students, urging them to attend. It was his public support, in fact, that caused the manager of the opera house to beg Jack to extend the engagement to one week. Before the end of that week, special excursion trains to Almira for the opera house performance were being run from the surrounding towns.

One of the personal items in the paper noted that Dorothy Blaisdell, known on the stage as Dorothy Madison, was staying at the home of her father during her engagement in "The Master."

A second paragraph announced that the young actress intended to pass a year in Europe studying music after her work with "The Master" was over. She would leave in the following May, accompanied by President Blaisdell.

Simon Fields canceled his dates in the neighborhood, and beat a retreat to the small farming towns.

Nickname Well Bestowed

"I HOPE they don't give my little boy any naughty nicknames at school?"

"Yes, ma; they call me 'Corns.'"

"How dreadful! And why do they call you that?"

"'Cause in our class, you know, I'm always at the foot."

A Financial Disturbance

"WHAT was the worst money panic you ever saw?" asked one financier of another.

"The worst money panic I ever saw," was the reply, "was when a five-cent piece rolled under the seat of a street car, and seven different women claimed it."

She Knew What Was the Matter

"WHAT'S the matter, pet?"

"That big, ugly man you sent to look at poor Fido says he has distemper, and I told him it wasn't true, and I wanted him to go away. There's nothing at all the matter with Fido's temper. It's his poor little stomach!"

MECHANICS FOR TOP-NOTCH READERS

Moving-Platform Railway

After nine years of effort, and the expenditure of many thousands of dollars, in the preparation of plans demanding the services of a corps of expert draftsmen, the moving platform, or continuous railway, came to the point of actual competition with the bidders for new subways in New York City.

The continuous railway, as planned, consists of three platforms moving at different speeds. The outer platform, which is next to the fixed floor of the station, moves at three miles an hour, the middle at six miles, and the platform next to the seats at nine miles. The scarcely perceptible motion of the first enables a passenger to step out without the slightest danger of stumbling, and, as the distribution of speed is the same, the person stepping from one platform to the other is unconscious of any motion.

A novel method of announcing names of exits to the street surface would be by means of immense megaphones equipped with a phonographic attachment run by an electric motor. At intervals of one minute, these horns would announce in clear, distinct barytone: "Fourteenth Street! Fourteenth Street! Exit to the street on your right!" or "Twenty-third Street! Twenty-third Street!" etc. The platforms would move noiselessly, so these calls could be heard plainly as the place of exit is approached.

MOVING PLATFORM.

Great Railroad Achievement

The completion of the great railway across the Andes marks the accomplish-

ment of a task which, in the words of one of our foremost engineering authorities, "will rank among the most remarkable achievements in the world."

The main scheme was to connect Valparaiso, on the Pacific coast, with Buenos Aires, on the Plata River, so that the Atlantic and Pacific towns might be brought into touch with one another within three days by railway, instead of a three weeks' voyage around the Straits of Magellan as at present.

For some years a line of railway had existed between Valparaiso and Los Andes, on the Chilean side, and between Buenos Aires and Mendoza, on the Argentine side, and the only obstacle to the joining up of the two towns, 150 miles apart, was this mountain range.

Mendoza is 2,350 feet above sea level, and from there the line is a continual ascent up to La Cumbre, the highest point in the pass, 12,800 feet above sea level, this being about 4,444 feet higher than the great St. Bernard Pass. No less than 118 bridges had to be constructed in the course of 32 miles, and in some cases the gradient is 14 in 100. At the top of the pass there is a tunnel, which, though only two miles in length, cost over $5,000,000 to construct.

A Composer's Wonderful Drums

Richard Strauss is not only one of the greatest composers of music, but is an inventor of exceptional ability in producing novel and extraordinary stage effects.

For the plashing of rain.

He has designed what is known in theatrical parlance as a thunder drum, which will imitate the most terrific peal, and with such fidelity that instances have been known where auditors in the theater have actually become nervous and frightened.

The Strauss drum is a good deal larger and flatter than the ordinary bass drum, which imitates booming artillery, and it is recognized now throughout Europe as the most effective invention of its character in existence.

Producing terrific peals of thunder.

To produce a realistic effect in many of his operas where a storm scene is a feature, Mr. Strauss has designed a smaller drum, which is called the hydrophone. It is filled with small stones, and is rotated on bearings. This gives the effect of the plashing of rain, and it is wonderfully realistic.

One of the Strauss inventions produces the effect of hissing steam and rushing water, but this is by the simple expedient of rubbing a drumhead with brushes. The trampling of horses and the old-time clog dances of Southern negroes is imitated by means of a Chinese wooden drum beaten with tubular sticks.

For an Easier Shave

Of the many curious patents granted by the department in Washington, the most recent is the invention of Julian Wodiski, to protect a man being shaved against the onion-laden breath or any other kind of a breath owned by the barber.

The Wodiski device consists of a shield made of leather or some material impervious to air, and is fitted on the barber's face between his nose and his chin. It is held in place with ordinary spectacle clips, and can be adjusted just as quickly as a pair of glasses.

The wielder of the razor is thus obliged to b r e a t h e through his nostrils, and the presence of the shield is a constant reminder that he shall keep his face at an angle that will not permit his breathing to be familiarly near.

Another advantage, b u t which is not set forth in the patent, is that the barber cannot talk while he is shaving.

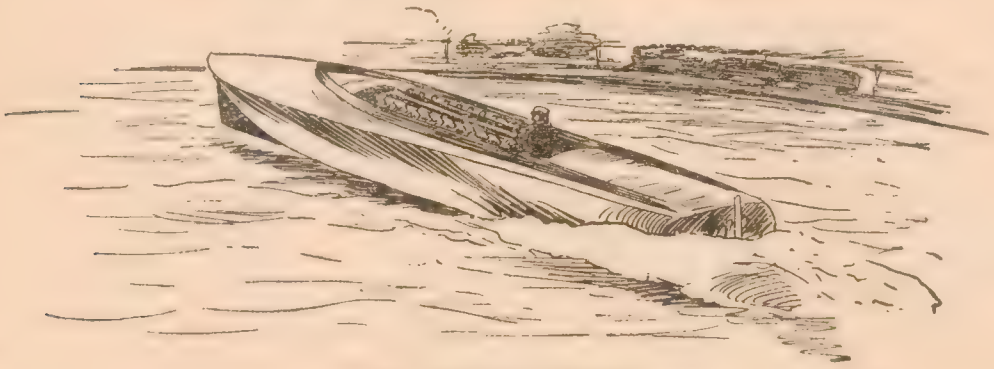
A COMFORTABLE SHAVE.

Fastest Craft Afloat

The Duke of Westminster, with his fifty-foot motor boat, recently made a wonderful showing as the defender of the Grand Prix International Cup at Monte Carlo; the speed then attained was almost incredible.

His boat is named the *Brunhilde*. She flies over and partly under the surface of the water at forty-six miles an hour. It is not at all unlikely that this will be increased and that forty-eight or even fifty miles an hour may be the new record.

It is impossible to comprehend pre-



THE "BRUNHILDE" SPEEDING.

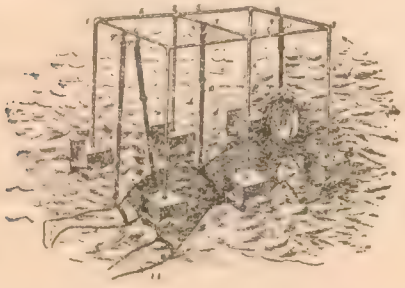
cisely what this speed means except by comparison with a locomotive engine, because there is nothing afloat that can be brought into parallel. A steam train that goes a little less than a mile a minute causes the near-by landscape to blur and to make recognition of detail impossible, but the passengers do not experience the same sensation as those on a fast-moving craft like a boat that skips over the surface and then plunges partly beneath it.

The friction is not as apparent as on a railroad train, but it is manifested in a more remarkable manner. Pushed to its highest speed, the Duke of Westminster's boat will cause headaches and sometimes bleeding of the nose.

Novel Swimming Device

The object of this invention is to enable a person to learn to swim.

It consists of a number of floats which support a framework. To the



framework is secured adjustable hangers for supporting the swimmer at different parts of his body.

English Telephone Customs

American telephone experts are in greater demand in England now than ever before. While the system there is excellent and in some respects superior to the methods employed on this side of the water, there are some things in which the Yankee companies are infinitely superior.

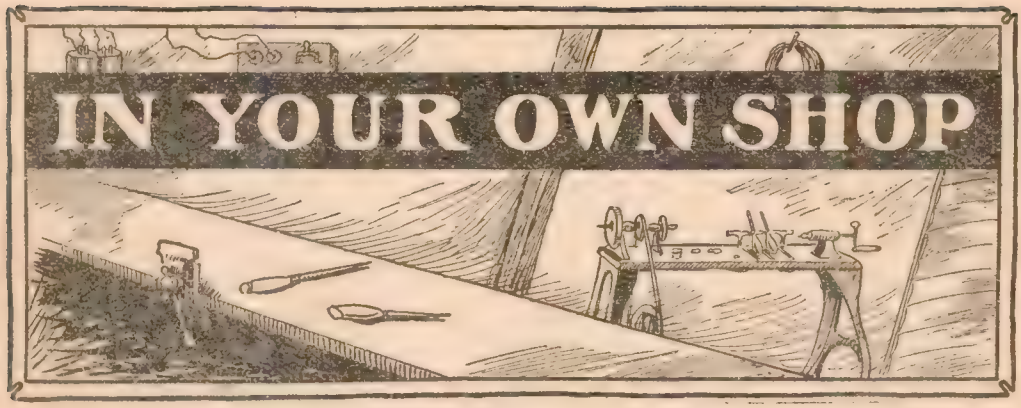
With all the improvements in mechanical devices, and in the automatic telephone, there are some rules maintained by the English companies that would be impossible in America. A call office in the Holborn district, London, is an iron booth, built on the side of the road. When a caller applies for a num-

IRON TELEPHONE BOOTH IN LONDON.

ber, the attendant respectfully steps outside, and waits until the conversation is finished. It doesn't matter what sort of weather this unfortunate person may be called upon to encounter, out he goes into the damp, the drizzle, or the cold, and out he stays until he is called to take the fee.

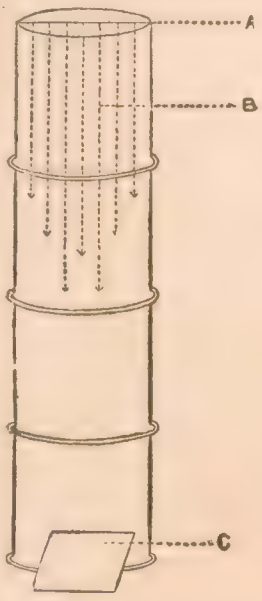
One Pair of Shoes, $2,500

The latest extravagance in footwear is seen in a London shop, where shoes made of the breast feathers of humming birds are exhibited, priced at $2,500 the pair—the highest price known for shoes without diamond or jewel settings. The making of a pair of humming-bird shoes takes six months.



An Easily Made Smokehouse

Along with these hints about making a smokehouse at small expense, it is in order to tell you how to cure the hams and bacon to be smoked in it; and it is all decidedly worth while in these days of high-priced meats. By curing hams and bacon at home, you can have them at about half price, and of the finest quality.



Pack the meat closely in a stone crock, sprinkling it liberally with salt as it is packed. Make a brine, using eight pounds of salt and two of sugar, for every hundred pounds of pork. Mix the salt and sugar, add enough water to dissolve, and boil thoroughly, skimming as fast as the scum forms, add a little black pepper after the mixture has cooked. Pour this over the meat, adding enough water to cover.

Leave the bacon in this solution ten days, and the hams three weeks. How one man built a smokehouse is thus described by C. R. Ross, its builder:

"I had on the place four two-foot sewer tiles which were left over from some drainage operations. These were placed one on top of the other with the flange down. This virtually formed a smokestack eight feet high. At one side of the base, I scooped out the dirt to admit an ordinary milk pan. In this the fire was kindled with cobs and hardwood chips. Across the top were placed iron rods (A) bearing hooks of varying lengths made of galvanized wire (B). The bacon and hams were hung on these.

"The whole contrivance was completed by tying a piece of sacking over the top to retain the smoke and placing a board over the opening in front (C).

"This has proved an entire success, and the only money outlay was for the sewer tiles which may be obtained at from eighty-five cents to one dollar each.

"We smoked the meat for two or three hours each day until it took on a good brown color. In this case it took four days. This part of the process is largely a matter of taste. Some might prefer to smoke it longer.

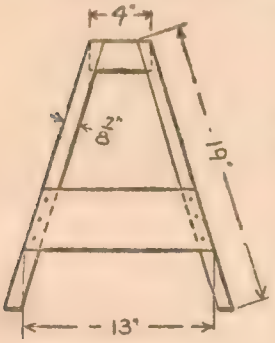
"With our small meat-curing plant, we feel that we have partially solved the problem of high prices."

Sawhorses for the Home Workshop

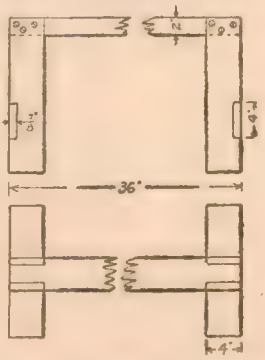
Every well-equipped workshop should have at least two sawhorses. They are almost indispensable, and are

an important part of the outfit. Long lengths of lumber cannot be sawed satisfactorily on improvised benches, and in the making of tables and other heavy furniture there is no getting on without them.

Build your own sawhorses. It is better than to buy them from a carpenter, because there may be some kinks you would like to work in on your own account, but, presuming that you want just the everyday, practicable sawhorse, it is better that the making of it shall be in your own shop for the practice, as well as for the familiarity with the many uses that will come with the building.



By studying the line drawing, it will be seen that the starting point is to nail one of the braces with one nail in an end to a pair of the legs at about ten inches above the foot of the legs. Secure the proper angle by pulling the opposite legs toward each other. Indicate the angles on the ends of the two by four, and saw on these lines four inches back from the ends. Then in the legs cut places for the braces to fit, and nail them in place.

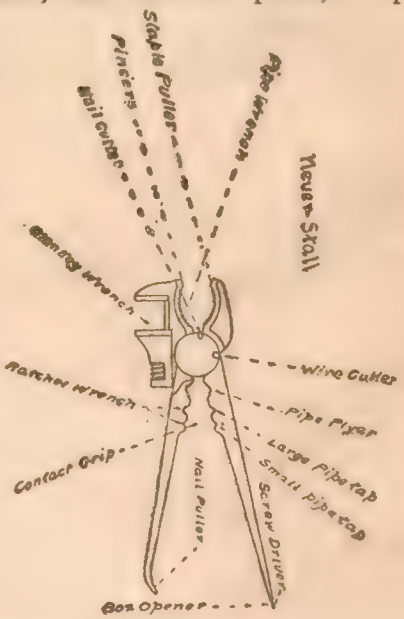


Next screw on the legs to the two by four, and bevel off the ends of the legs so that they are flush with the top of the horse and the floor.

New Combination Tool

To produce a chest of tools at the cost of one tool has been the aim of inventors for many years.

The illustration shows how fifteen tools have been mechanically incorporated into one. It includes a monkey wrench, two sizes of pliers, or pipe



wrenches, a nail puller, a wire cutter, a staple puller, a screw driver, a nail cutter, a contact grip, two top holders, a ratchet wrench, and a box opener.

Handy Broom Holder

A broom should never be permitted to stand on the floor. This kind of treatment bends the wisps out of shape, and not only makes sweeping harder, but wears the broom out much quicker.

An always-ready broom hanger can be made of a strip of wood three-quarter inches thick, two inches wide, and three inches long. A hole just a trifle larger than the broom handle is bored through, as shown in the drawing. A

piece of wood one inch thick, one inch wide, and two inches long is secured to the larger strip by means of one or two hinges. The smaller piece is screwed to the wall, with the hinged side down.

When through with the broom, simply shove the handle through the hole when the leverage of the broom resting against the wall will hold it in place.

A Wholesome Drinking Cup

Profitable and pleasant work is found in the manufacture of the sanitary drinking cup, now in general use throughout the country. In half a dozen large cities, its use is made compulsory by ordinance. It is possible to buy a specially prepared sterilized paper which is waterproof and at the same time surgically clean.

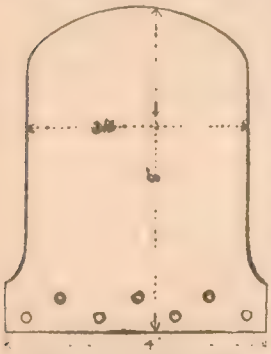
The making is a simple and easily learned process. The sheet should be from nine to twelve inches square. Fold this into a triangle. This gives fold *a*, as shown in the illustration. Then fold *1* over to meet side 2, 3, at *b*, forming a right angle with that side. Fold corner 2 to meet side 3 at *c* in a similar manner. Separate the two corners 3, turning one down over the already folded pieces, and turning the other corner down over the plain side of the paper. Then you have a perfect drinking cup that costs so little that it can be thrown away after being used once.

An Adjustable Book Stand

A book stand for holding a dozen books or less can be made the pleasure and profit of a very little work. The ends, or cheeks, of the stand are formed of any kind of wood, though hardwood is the best.

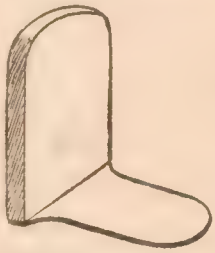
(FIG. 1. The side or cheek.)

These cheeks may be made rectangular or have one end rounded, as shown in Fig. 1. The wood should be three-quarters or one inch thick, and four inches on the side. Although painting the cheeks is not, generally speaking, a good practice, these cheeks should be stained the color of the table or bookcase on which the stand is to be placed.



(FIG. 2. The base stand.)

Two strips of metal—preferably of brass, though tin will serve the purpose—are cut as shown in Fig. 2. One of these base plates is screwed to the base of each wooden cheek, so that the latter will stand rigidly upright.



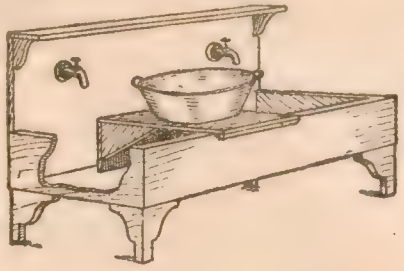
(FIG. 3.) One side of book stand complete.

The side of strips which are to rest on the table should be covered with some kind of soft cotton or woolen fabric to keep the surface from scratching. The material is cut the shape of the metal base and secured with glue.

The stand is now ready for use, and is shown complete in Fig. 3.

For Tall Dish Washers

A tall woman found it back-breaking work to stoop over the sink when washing dishes, so her son invented a



useful aid, which for want of a better name may be called an elevated dish-pan stand—shown in the illustration.

The way he did it was to take the side and one end of a box, forming a right angle and nail them together securely. Then he braced them on either side, and nailed a narrow strip along the front to prevent slipping from its place.

New Gasoline Soldering Iron

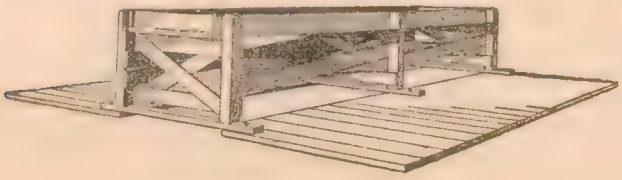
This new labor-saving tool is really two tools in one—a soldering iron and a blow torch. As a soldering iron, it not only saves time when doing a job, but it gives an even, uniform heat, regulated according to requirements. The

tool is light in weight and easily handled.

As a soldering iron, it is fitted with one universal copper suitable for any kind of work. Used as a blow torch, it is only necessary to remove the copper. It is far superior to the old-style charcoal fire pot.

A Boon for Men and Cattle

The farmer who seeks his own personal comfort, in addition to keeping his cattle in good condition, will welcome the feed bunk with platforms for muddy lots. It is inexpensive, and has given complete satisfaction wherever it has been used. An ordinarily intelligent farm hand, who knows how to handle a hammer, chisel, saw, and spirit level, can do the building.

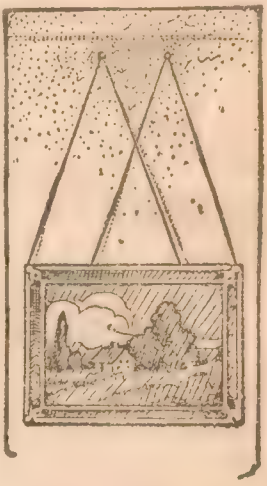


The accompanying illustration shows a feed bunk with platforms for use in muddy lots, which is inexpensive and has proved satisfactory. The platforms are sixteen feet by six feet, and are made of two-inch bridge plank cut six feet long, laid on five white-oak two-inch by four-inch timbers sixteen feet long. The feed bunks are made in the usual way, two feet six inches high, three feet wide, and sixteen feet long.

There are three advantages in the floors. The feeder has a dry place to walk when putting in feed; the cattle are out of the mud, and not in a strained or cramped position while feeding; by having the floors six feet wide, all waste falls upon the floor, and the hogs get all before it is lost in the mud.

Sensible Picture Hanging

The commonest way of hanging pictures is by two heavy perpendicular wires fastened to either end of the frame, or two wires running from the frame and forming the apex of a triangle over the nail in the wall.



A distinct improvement over either of these methods is shown in the sketch. The picture is held in better position, and no amount of jarring will disturb it. Two wires are passed over hooks in the usual manner; they are made fast to the middle of the picture and at the ends. A fine, almost invisible, wire is best for the purpose. This plan, once tried, means the abandonment of the old-fashioned way.

Where the Moose Calls

By J. Lenivers Carew

In the Maine forest with a man who tried the back-to-nature cure for society-itis. Quickly he was ready to agree that a gun in the hand with the moose in front of it is better than a dozen licenses to hunt, should the woods, by chance, be filled with chaps who write their own game laws, and write them with bullets. There's a lot more than moose hunting to the story—as the man from the city ascertained.

(COMPLETE NOVEL)

CHAPTER I.

BACK TO NATURE.

THE Congressman from Maine sent a quivering smoke ring toward the ceiling, stroked his well-trimmed chin whisker, and surveyed critically the good-looking young man who sat before him at the club window.

"What's this appointment you're looking for, Phillip, and why can't your father's son get it?" he inquired.

"It's just this way," replied the other, putting off for the moment a direct answer to his friend's question. "I stayed in Vienna and St. Petersburg a while—in fact, quite a long time. I got sick of it all. Of course, I had the freedom of everything—persona grata everywhere, but after the novelty wore off there was simply nothing in it. State balls, receptions, and high jinks all the time, and I little more than a spectator, but I learned something of the language."

"You met some big people, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes. Every few minutes I was presented to the prince of this, or the grand duke of that, but I had to be content to make my best kotow and slip away from the sacred atmosphere as quickly as I could."

"Speaking of the nobility," remarked the Congressman, "the Grand Duke Kurt is over here now. He's been hustled and bustled around here for a week or more. Now, he's tearing around the country somewhere, thinking he's seeing it, but he'll be back here, I fancy, and you may meet him."

"No, thanks," said the young man. "What's the use? Those chaps can't be human to an ordinary mortal. I'd as soon meet their wax effigies. Now, I thought I could land some fairly decent consulship, or the job of sweeping out some embassy, you know," explained the young man wearily, "but my drag wasn't quite good enough. Too many other drags on the job. I've pulled every wire in Washington that I could get hold of. I'm not going to try for it any longer."

"What are you going to do?"

"Well, all I want is to get thick with some real Americans for a while—right next to the soil. Not in dear old Washington, mind you—too much of the same kind of kotowing—but out in the woods or mountains somewhere. I think I'll try for a shooting trip, or something like that."

"I see," said the man from Maine. "Look here, if you're so keen about roughing it, I've got a proposition for you. I've got a log camp up home with two thousand acres of forest around it, full of everything you want to shoot at."

Phillip Carton was all attention.

"There's an old caretaker living there," continued the Congressman, "but otherwise you'd be in solitary confinement. The natives don't like me because I've enforced the game laws. The

caretaker writes me that some of them are going to take pot shots at me if I come up there again, and they've tried to burn the camp, but I suppose you don't mind such little elements of excitement."

"That's mighty good of you, Mr. Harris," said Carton enthusiastically. "That's the very kind of a place I'm looking for. When can I go?"

"Any time at all," laughed Harris. "You can leave to-night, and be comfortably fixed in the bungalow by to-morrow night."

"I'm off!" cried Phillip. "You can't know how keen I am to get back to nature—to get over all the pomp and gold lace and stuff I've been swimming through."

CHAPTER II.

DANGER SIGNALS.

Phillip Carton was the only passenger to alight from the train when it stopped at the little flag station, some six miles from the shooting camp of the hospitable Congressman.

It was near dusk, and the three or four buildings were little more than discernible in outline. One of the larger ones seemed a sort of general store, and its dingy, dimly lighted windows were filled with fishing tackle and miscellaneous supplies for sportsmen and trappers.

Near the door some human denizens of the region lounged idly, and looked at the visitor with suspicious interest.

Carton nodded to them.

"I'm looking for a man named Berry," he said. "He takes care of the camp somewhere around here which I am going to."

One of the loungers spat, and, after eying the young man ominously for a moment, said:

"Berry ain't here no more. Got scairt away."

"That's interesting," remarked Carton, with a glum shake of the head. "Can I get out to the camp? Is it far from here?"

"I s'pose you can get there, ef yer set on goin'," answered the man. "But tain't much of a place fer pleasure when ye can't shoot ner fish."

"I have every intention of shooting," remarked Carton, with a nod toward his gun cases and luggage. "That's what I came for."

"H'm! Too bad!" sniffed the man. "Didn't know 'twas prohib'ted, I s'pose?"

"No, I can't say I did," said Carton. "That seems rather odd. It's open season, and I have the full privileges from the owner of the preserve."

"But ye hain't got full privileges from the folks as has the say-so!" announced the man.

"What do you mean?" asked Carton sharply.

"Waal, now, young man," began the countryman pointedly, "you look 'round these parts, an' you'll see a lot o' signs stuck on the trees, tellin' how th' Honorable Peter H. Harris will raise all kinds o' ructions with any poor feller that's caught sayin' his soul's his own 'round here. And then you look farther, an' you'll see some more signs, stuck up a while back, that says the fellers that was born an' raised up in these parts'll raise some ructions with Pete Harris or any of his politicians or sportin' fellers as come gunnin' 'round here fer things they hain't any more right to than we have."

Carton smiled a little sourly.

"Property rights don't stand for much up this way, I suppose?" he said.

"Prop'ty rights yer gran'mother!" snorted the woodsman. "What we're lookin' out fer is the rights o' the men that has 'em. We 'n' our people before us has been livin' off'n the woods here sence the Injuns got through. It don't stan' ter reason that a bunch o' city sports can come snooping 'round ter tell us what our rights be, or what they ain't. It don't go!

"Pete Harris come up here with a bunch o' money he got off'n the lunkheads that sent 'im to Congress, an' bought up a piece o' woods, an' put some of his dressed-up lackeys 'round ter keep us fellers off'n the grass. We said 'booh!' ter some of 'em, an' they all lit out, an' hain't quit runnin' yet.

Old Berry stuck it out the longest, but now he's gone down ter Bangor ter the hospitle with a bullet in 'is shoulder, an' I don't reckon he'll set much store on gettin' back here again right off."

Carton shrugged his shoulders, and frowned impatiently. "Never mind any more of that," he said sharply. "I want to get out to the camp. If you can't tell me how to get there, I'll have to help myself."

The woodsman laughed with sinister dryness.

"I got no 'bjections ter ye goin' there," he said. "Give me two dollars, an' I'll take ye out 'n my old buckboard."

"All right. Get it here as quick as you can," said Carton. "While you're hitching up, I'll lay in a few things here at the store. If Berry is gone, I'll have to be my own steward and everything else."

CHAPTER III.

A SAMPLE.

During the buckboard trip under the autumn stars and through the fragrant pine woods, Carton casually mentioned the matter of ingress to the camp.

"Ye won't need no keys," said the woodsman, with a chuckle, and Carton appreciated the fact when they drew up at the door of the handsome log bungalow and mounted to the porch, with the smoky lantern which the guide carried.

Interesting the camp certainly was, but it had the air of a ruin. The front door was off its hinges, and lay flat upon the porch. A fine bearskin rug was spread upon the threshold as a doormat. On the porch, on the ground about it, and within the doorway, were scattered articles of ornament and utility, common to the camp of a wealthy sportsman, in melancholy abandon.

Carton closed his lips to a hard, straight line, and strode into the cabin. The woodsman followed him, but he ignored him, and proceeded to strike matches and light the dusty lamps which still contained some oil.

"This is a job for some of you to be proud of!" he said to the woodsman, with an indignant glance.

The man uttered a dry chuckle, and let his eye roam over the place with evil satisfaction.

What had been a hunting hall for a prince was now but a mockery of it. Scarcely a breakable thing in the room remained unbroken. A fine mahogany center table had been hacked with knives and inscribed with rude symbols and initials. An enormous moose-head trophy over the chimney breast was slashed and bullet-riddled almost to the point of obliteration, having served as a target for the guns of roistering marauders. The whole place was a farrago of wreck and disorder.

Having unloaded his traps and settled them in a corner, Carton thrust a two-dollar bill into his guide's hand, and motioned him toward the door.

"That's all I want of you," he said sternly. "You'd better go!"

The man grinned and walked out onto the porch with an insolent swagger.

"Hope ye have a good time, young man," he said meaningly. "And ef yer ma sets much store by ye, yer'd better be careful 'bout goin' out 'round here after dark."

"I'll give you a tip in return, my man," said Carton angrily. "While I'm a guest here, I'm responsible for the place—not only the camp, but the whole preserve. I shall not parley with you and your crowd of hoodlums. I want you to keep off. That's all!"

The man only replied with a harsh guffaw. He climbed into the buckboard, and drove slowly away on the winding road which encircled the camp.

A moment later, Carton heard him stop his horse. Then a pistol shot sounded out of the darkness, and a bullet came through one of the broken windows, and flattened itself upon the chimney breast.

Carton started nervously, and almost cried out, but calmed himself, and smiled faintly. The shot was merely a threat and warning.

CHAPTER IV.

EXPERIMENTS.

A part of the first lonely night in the log camp was spent by Carton in a laborious effort to put the place into a semblance of order. By main strength and much labor, he managed to hang the heavy oaken door again upon its hinges, and he contrived a stout bar for it.

There were wooden shutters inside the windows, and he fitted them into place. He had little fear of being made a target by the rascally woodsmen at once, but it would be inconvenient to have the few oil lamps snuffed out beyond hope of repair.

Some time after midnight he inspected the four bedrooms of the bungalow, and made himself a bed upon the least damaged of the dismantled cots, but there was little sleep for him.

He was hardly scared by the threats of the woodsman, but there was very little humor in the situation, and he fully believed that the quest for game would not be the only excitement of his sojourn.

He had been but lately in turbulent Russia, and countries where protection of the individual ceases at the city gates, but here in Yankeeland—in the calm, smug, old Pine Tree State—a revolver bullet had whistled over his head for the first time in his life, and for the first time his peace was menaced by enemies of law and order.

When the sun rose, the solitary hunter took down one of the shutters and let in the light. He made coffee, and cooked some eggs on the kitchen range. After that he sat down to a pipe, and reflected upon the day's program.

As yet he had done nothing to provoke the active resentment of the natives. It seemed logical that they would hold off until he showed his hand. It was unlikely that they would molest him so long as he merely dwelt in the bungalow. Just what actions on his part were under their ban was problematical, and could only be put to the test.

About nine o'clock, he took a rifle, and walked out into the woods, after fixing a padlock in the staple of the door. With Berry, the caretaker, gone, there was little hope of getting a guide. The guides of the locality were the very men who forbade him to shoot or trespass upon what they fancied to be their hereditary domain.

He dared not go far from the camp until conditions should develop to his clearer understanding, so he had scant hope of picking up any game in the immediate vicinity. But he was feverish for action—if action there must be.

As a token of activity to the waiting enemy, he sighted his rifle at certain objects about the wood, and tried his marksmanship upon them. Surely some one would hear the firing and know that he had not feared to walk afield.

For an hour he wandered, keeping himself within easy distance of the camp, and shooting at irregular intervals. Suddenly he heard the sound of an ax striking upon wood. It was not the dull whack of the blade upon green wood, but it had the resonance of dry planks, as in a wall or door.

He had emptied his magazine, but he hastily filled it from his cartridge belt, and then started running through the woods.

Into the clearing about the camp he ran, and brought himself to an abrupt halt as he saw two men busily engaged in chopping down his front door.

CHAPTER V.

VENISON FOR TWO.

"Well, what can we do for yer?" demanded one of the housebreakers insolently, as both of them ceased their attack upon the door and turned to regard the young man in khaki, standing before them with his rifle ready for business.

"The shoe is on the other foot," replied Carton. "What do you want? It must be my guns and luggage you are after."

The men laughed easily.

"We just nacherly object to any one

buttin' in and putting a lock on our club," said the first speaker. "This here's our club, ye know, an' 'tain't manners for you ter come along, a perfec' stranger, an' close 'er up on us."

"We won't discuss it!" said Carton. "I am using 'the club' at present, and I prefer to be alone. Get out!"

With no more objection than a jaunty indifference, the men stepped down from the porch and strolled away.

"We're not aimin' to hurt a kid like you," said the one who had not previously spoken, "but ye'd better get wise ter what yer up against! Trespassin'll be 'tended to by us fellers regardless o' youth an' swell clothes. Yer can stay here in the club an' enjoy the beauties o' natur', but don't go a-meddlin' with the game. We got game laws that was made afore the State ever thought of 'em."

Carton bandied no more words with them, but stood and watched them silently as they went away through the woods. He realized that hostilities only waited for an opening, but he was intent upon pursuing the sport he had come for, and the warnings and menaces only added to his resolution.

He stayed at the bungalow through the middle of the day, patching up the door and making the place ready for a possible siege.

Toward evening, he prepared to go forth again. He went through his luggage, and attached all really valuable personal effects to his person. He took his best rifle, and secreted the other one and his shotgun in the little cellar. Then he made the door fast again, and set out for deeper woods.

He had hunted much in the woods, and needed no guide to keep the trail. Near dusk he found a small lake at the bottom of a ravine, and upon its shores the spoor of moose. The place was dense with scrub oak and underbrush, and promised much to a man with patience and knowledge of the sport.

He waited in the vicinity for some time, and darkness came on rapidly. Suddenly, out of the forest stepped a fine bull moose. It held its great antlered head up, and sniffed the balsam-laden air warily. Carton breathed hard, and held himself ready in his cover of evergreen.

Down to the water's edge stepped the moose, and lowered his head to drink. It seemed a pity to slaughter so royal a creature, but the hunter's spirit was strong, and he noiselessly poked the muzzle of his rifle through the branches and drew a bead upon the heart of the beast.

It was getting too dark for a pursuit of any length, so he aimed with unusual caution, hoping to bring the quarry to earth at the first shot.

The moose suddenly threw up its head, and listened. On the other side of the lake—it was little more than a pool—something had moved in the undergrowth. The splendid animal sniffed the air, and gave a snort of suspicion.

Carton steadied his Remington, and held his breath, and was about to press the trigger, when——

Bang! A puff of smoke came from the other bank. The moose reared, and struck at the air for an instant, looking angrily for its unseen enemy; then it whirled and dashed off into the forest with wild leaps.

It was apparent to Carton that the self-appointed game wardens were employing a unique method of conservation.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. DINKELSPIEL.

Lying low in the covert, Carton remained quiet, and kept his eyes upon the spot whence the puff of smoke had come. The branches were agitated slightly, and it appeared that somebody was making hastily away, up the slope of the ravine. Not a glimpse of anything did the watcher get, however.

"It was a poor shot, anyway," he sniffed. "If he wants the moose now, he's got to go after it, and I guess I still have a show at it myself."

The moose had made off on his side of the ravine, and he had little difficulty in picking up its trail from the small

splashes of blood which he found a intervals along the packed-down carpet of dried leaves.

The other hunter undoubtedly would make his way around the ravine and pick up the trail, if he had any woodcraft, but Carton was ahead of him, and as keen on the chase as a staghound.

Unless the moose failed rapidly, there was really no hope of overtaking it. The only light now was from the afterglow of the sunset, and Carton repeatedly lost the trail, and only found it again with much careful searching.

He stopped frequently, and listened for sounds of the bull or the other pursuer, but there was nothing more than an occasional crackling of leaves and branches afar off.

The glow faded in the West to an evening gray, and presently Carton could no longer trace out the crimson trail. He paused, and took his bearings, giving up all hope of finding the quarry. Although the animal had bled profusely, it might still cover miles before giving up.

He determined upon the general direction of the camp, and started his homeward march. The undergrowth was very dense, and at times he made his way with difficulty. Woodsmen as good as he might find it hard to strike a definite trail after the pitch darkness had settled down.

Suddenly, as he strode along, there was a commotion in the brush ahead of him. He paused, and peered through the gloom. There, not thirty feet from him, rose a pair of moose antlers. He caught his breath excitedly, and threw up his rifle, but the antlers wavered an instant, and then sank down out of sight.

The hunter sprang forward eagerly, and parted the bushes. There, amid broken branches and trampled leaves, lay the bull, dead.

Carton sighed wearily.

"Well, I guess it belongs to the other fellow," he murmured, and stopped only long enough to admire the head and the sleek carcass of the fallen moose.

He took a compass from his pocket, and found that he must strike a match to see the needle. Then he made hasty calculations, and struck off through the dense bush.

He had gone something less than a quarter mile, and was struggling through a tangle of briers, when a shot cut the air, not fifty feet from him, and a bullet struck the leather-covered canteen at his hip.

With a cry of surprised alarm, he threw up his own rifle, and fired recklessly into the darkness, in the direction of the report. He was alarmed, but he was also mad, with all his Yankee grit.

"If that's your game," he yelled shrilly, "I'll play it, too!"

A vague outline of some form loomed in front of him, and, without thinking or pausing to take aim, he fired at it with the last shot in the magazine.

The form leaped to one side, and a voice cried out in mortal terror:

"Stop, madman! Would you kill me?"

"No; but I'll come mighty near it!" shouted Carton. And he bounded across the intervening space, and, as the stranger stepped back and raised his rifle, Carton hurled his own weapon, butt foremost, at the head of the foe.

The man cried out, ducked to one side, and let go a random shot. At the same moment, Carton sprang forward and struck his good, hard fist into the face of the fellow, and bowled him over like a ninepin.

"Now, I've got you!" Carton cried, gripping the prisoner's throat with the wiry fingers of his left hand, and adding, with his right, another punch in the face for good measure.

The other struggled desperately, and groaned. He was no weakling, and his strong arms fought madly for a hold on the relentless captor. But the fingers pressed on the throat with the insistence of a boa constrictor, and presently the man gave a final heave of his whole body, and relaxed into an inert rag.

Carton laughed grimly, got up, and stood over his vanquished adversary. Then he struck a wind match, and by

its glow was able to make out the lines of a fashionable Norfolk jacket, a pair of well-sprung knickerbockers, and two legs incased in trim leather puttees. Then the match went out.

"Great Scott!" he gasped. "What's this—a fool tenderfoot?"

He stooped over the man, and shook him roughly, but he had done a good job of putting him to sleep. He fanned him with his hat, and beat him upon the chest with the flat of his hand, to stimulate respiration. After a while there was a gasp and a gurgle.

"Wake up, old chap, and maybe I'll apologize," cried Carton, with a touch of amusement.

He got out his flask, and poured a little brandy between the man's lips. The stranger choked, and struggled to a sitting posture.

"That's better," said Carton. "Now, tell me how you happened to be out gunning for me."

The stranger moaned, and put his weakly trembling hands to his bruised face. Carton struck another match, and held it over the face.

"By Jove, I believe you're a gentleman," he laughed, seeing a sort of humor in the situation.

The man was about his own age, and had the face of a well-bred Englishman—on a guess—and the clothes of distinctly British cut strengthened the suggestion. His complexion was light, and his upper lip was covered with a small, tightly waxed, yellow mustache.

"What do you wish to do with me?" quavered the fallen one, suddenly gaining strength and sitting up straighter. "I am in your power."

"Oh, cut out the dramatics!" said Carton; "this is no comic opera. Who are you, anyway?"

The stranger once more passed his hands over his battered countenance. "I scarcely know—I scarcely know," he moaned. "I—I am—Mr. Jones. Jones. That's my name."

"A little thin," said Carton suspiciously. "Why can't a man that's ashamed of his own name think up something besides Jones and Smith? You might as well call yourself 'Dinkelspiel.'"

"Very well, if you like it that way, 'Dinkelspiel' it shall be," assented the stranger.

CHAPTER VII.

FRIENDLY RELATIONS.

"And now, if I am not too inquisitive, what was your purpose in trying to bag me?" asked Carton, when the other had recovered something of his equanimity.

"I hardly know how to apologize," said the unknown, in some confusion. "I am far from being a novice with a gun, but I can only admit that I fancied you were the moose I was pursuing, and I fired at you before I had a chance to perceive my mistake. It will stamp me forever as an ass, among sportsmen. I never made such a wretched error before. I don't know how I can make amends to you; my position is too absurd. You did well to thrash me, you know; I jolly well deserved it!"

"Cheer up; all is forgiven," laughed Carton good-humoredly. "It's rather a thin joke to have death come within the thickness of a canteen to you, but I'm here, and the incident is closed, as far as I am concerned. I suppose, then, that you were the man that shot the moose back there at the pond?"

"I shot the moose, yes," said the unknown sportsman. "I am sure I wounded it, but I trailed it until darkness came, and you are the first living creature I've seen. In such a wilderness it is hardly strange that I was expecting to meet no one but my friend, the moose."

"Well, you got the bull—it's dead—over there a little way. You can hardly do anything with it to-night, but the wild things here may leave you the antlers and hoofs. Your guides can find the place in the morning. You have guides, I suppose?"

"Back at the shooting lodge, yes," answered the stranger. "You see, I am a guest at a camp a few miles from here. I came away alone to-day for a little fun. The trail from the camp to

that pool is well marked, and, if I can find the pool again, I shall have no difficulty in getting back to the lodge by midnight."

"If you want to get back to your own party, I think I'm enough of a woodsman to help you locate the pool," said Carton. "But my own camp is comparatively near, and you are welcome to what little hospitality it affords."

"You are too good!" protested the stranger. "I have tried to kill you, my friend, and now you offer me hospitality. But no, I must thank you, and decline. I am expected back to-night, you see, and my friends would be alarmed if I did not appear."

"Well, I'm sorry to lose your company, but it's time to be off," said Carton. And he took out his pipe, and lighted it.

As the wind match flared brightly, he looked at the face of his companion.

"By Jove, Dinkelspiel, but you're a sight!" he cried. "I'm really sorry I had to beat you up so, but it makes me mad to have a stranger take pot shots at me. It would be hard enough to stand it from a friend, you know."

The man with the battered countenance laughed ruefully.

"It is nothing," he said courteously. "I assure you, sir, the Dinkelspiels are sportsmen. If they make errors, they are willing to accept the penalty."

So talking, the two men made their way laboriously back to the pool, and there they separated with cordial expressions of good will and the polite hope of meeting again.

CHAPTER VIII.

A PARTY AT THE BUNGALOW.

It was late when Carton got back to the bungalow, having felt his way over the dark trail by woodsman's instinct alone.

Lights were burning in the camp!

Carton sighed wearily. He had had enough of excitement for one day, and a passage at arms with his unfriendly neighbors would appear better on the next day's program.

He kept out of the range of light, and stole cautiously around the clearing until he could see the interior of the building. The shutters were all open, and the door as well. All the lamps were lighted, and the place was apparently thrown open to all comers.

At a table sat four men, playing cards.

They doubtless awaited his return, or perhaps they believed him to be lost in the woods. As they played, they conversed and laughed together in low tones.

Some ten feet from the table, four shotguns were stacked against the cabin wall.

For a time the watcher waited, and considered his plan of action. The situation was not without humor, but it had plenty of seriousness in it.

On a sudden resolve, the young man crept forward in the shadow, and approached the veranda. One of the men was dealing cards, and all were silent for the moment. Then, as they picked up their hands, a slight buzz of conversation arose.

With a sudden leap, Carton was in the doorway with his rifle advanced menacingly, and his finger crooked around the trigger.

Confusion reigned. The cards fell upon the table and floor, and the men sprang for their shotguns with cries and violent curses.

"Hands up—all of you!" shouted Carton. "The first man that touches a gun will get this!"

Reluctantly the men raised their hands above their heads, and turned malevolent eyes upon the young man who held the trump.

"Well, what now?" demanded one of them.

"It's time you were all at home," said Carton pleasantly. "I do not care to entertain you to-night. You'll have to leave your guns here, but you'll have to start now and march!"

One low-browed ruffian—Carton recognized him as one of the men who had previously tried to force an entrance to the cabin—dropped back into a chair, still keeping his hands elevated.

"I ain't a-goin' ter take his bluff," he asserted. "'Tain't likely this city feller's going ter shoot us up. 'Twouldn't look well fer a nice young feller to kill four fellers like us. He'd get strung up for it. I'm a-goin' ter stay where I be! An' I ain't goin' ter keep my hands up like this, nuther!"

So saying, he dropped his hands in his lap, and grinned at the perplexed Carton. Taking the tip, the other men dropped into chairs, and announced their intention of remaining. They were not taking orders, they said, from a butter-in that had no right to be in the place at all.

Carton stood, and looked at them with a puzzled frown.

"Look here, my men," he said presently. "I mean business. You've broken into my place, and now you've got to get out or suffer the consequences. I'll give you just half a minute. After that, there will be something started—by me!"

A big, insolent-looking woodsman took an old silver watch from his pocket, and counted off thirty seconds. "Well—time's up, young feller," he drawled. "Now, just what aire ye goin' ter start?"

There was an appreciative laugh from the other three, and Carton stood there, rifle advanced—a figure of power and menace—but palpably nonplused.

He looked at the guns by the wall. He looked at the grinning, insolent faces. The four oil lamps flickered and smoked in their brackets, and the night birds cried dolefully outside in the black night.

What could he do? He held the whip—to all appearances—but what availed it? The men were right; he certainly would not shoot them, and what could one man do to eject four brawny ruffians from the house, when they were so determined as this not to go?

Carton carried a revolver in a holster at his hip. He took this suddenly in his left hand, and covered the quartet with it.

"I want perfect quiet here now!" he declared. "I shall resent any movement from any one."

In the ceiling of the room was a square scuttle leading to the loft, and a light ladder gave access to it. Shifting the revolver to his right hand, Carton took his rifle in his left, and tossed it up into the loft. Then he backed over to the wall, and grasped one of the guns.

One of the "guests" started up suddenly, and the revolver spoke. The bullet frayed the sleeve of the man's coat, and he cried out in alarm.

"Keep your seats, men, and save trouble!" said Carton sternly.

One by one he took the shotguns, and tossed them up into the loft till none remained. Then he fixed the ladder firmly in place, and mounted it slowly, never for an instant leaving the men uncovered with his revolver.

A smile passed around the quartet of visitors.

"'Fraid it'll be some time afore ye come down again, young man," remarked one of them.

"Oh, I'm not quite as thick as that," laughed Carton. "I really know better than to make a trap for myself, you know.

"And now, gentlemen, I'm going to entertain myself for a while at your expense. I hate to destroy my good lamps, but something must be sacrificed."

He sat down now upon the edge of the wide scuttle, and drew the light ladder up into the loft, cutting off all approach from the lower floor. Laying down the revolver, he took up his rifle again, and with an air of carelessness fired a shot, which shattered one of the oil lamps and extinguished its flame.

Two other lamps went the same way, and then the room became gloomy under a single uncertain, yellow light.

"I bid you good night, gentlemen," smiled Carton, and shot out the last lamp. The place was as dark as the woods outside.

"Who's got a match?" cried one of the puzzled men.

"Lights out for the night, gentle-

men!" cried Carton from above. And then he fired five shots in quick succession from the magazine rifle. The sharp reports rang and reverberated in the cabin, and the flashes lighted up the scared faces of the woodsmen uncannily.

A moment of oaths and cries of alarm and rage, and then Carton fired his forty-four down into the darkness, laughing between the shots.

A yell of terror and pain followed one of the shots, and instantly the confusion became a wild panic.

"Sorry to hit anybody, but you mustn't get in the way," called the host from his perch.

But the terrified men, stumbling over the furniture and each other, presently found the windows and door, and in a few moments they were making off into the woods, shouting back awful threats of the wrath to come.

CHAPTER IX.

NEW HOSTILITIES.

Carton came down from his stronghold in the loft after the departure of his guests, and labored to put the shutters once more in place and bar them securely. Then, feeling safe from further molestation that night, he laid down, and slept the sleep of the physically weary.

In the morning he took down one of the shutters to let in the light, and peered cautiously out into the surrounding forest. Everything was quiet, and it seemed unlikely that any demonstration would be made until later in the day.

After a breakfast of bacon and eggs, he ventured to open the door, and step onto the porch. Some rude characters scrawled upon the floor of the porch in white chalk immediately caught his eye. Some one had crept back in the small hours of the morning, and chalked this message of warning on the boards:

YOU SHON YORE HAND. NOW YOU CAN LOOK OUT FORE YORESEF.

The inscription was embellished at the end with a clumsy attempt at a death's-head.

Carton laughed, then bit his lip, and cast a furtive glance around him at the silent trees and woodland reaches. To one accustomed to the turmoil of cities, the stillness was oppressive. Late butterflies flopped cheerlessly through the woods, and bluejays and chickadees gave their tribal calls from the treetops, but there was nothing human in evidence but himself, and the very absence of his enemies seemed a sort of vague menace.

He sat down on the open porch, and smoked a pipe reflectively. Discretion told him to give up the impersonal feud, and take the first train out of the troublous region. There was nothing to be gained personally by staying and fighting the thing out, and there was everything to lose, if the battle should go against him. But he had accepted the hospitality of Congressman Harris, and assumed, in a way, a certain responsibility for the camp, and love of adventure prompted him to remain and fight the fight to a finish.

He found an excuse for venturing once more afield in the fact that a steady diet of bacon and eggs did not appeal to him, and the larder was bare of fresh meat. So he set forth again with his rifle, toward noon, and took a new trail into the densest part of the surrounding forest.

The sun, which had shone brightly, became obscured by clouds, and the day became gray, cheerless, and cold. He stole through the woods with an Indianlike quietness unusual in an amateur, peering cautiously around him and listening intently to the slightest sounds.

Suddenly something moved the undergrowth about a hundred yards in front of him. He stopped and watched the spot breathlessly. The bushes stirred again slightly, and some of the twigs of saplings resolved themselves into the palmlike antlers of a young bull moose.

He grasped his rifle firmly, and stood ready. After a few moments, there came a crackling of twigs, and the

young bull leaped out of the cover, and bounded away with every evidence of having seen him.

Carton let drive with the Remington, and sprang forward in pursuit. The moose gave an extra bound at the crack of the rifle, and staggered for an instant, but the wound was apparently not vital, for it went on with unabated speed.

The trail was not easy to follow. The moose was out of sight before the hunter could take aim at it, and he followed it, as a forlorn hope, by means of a few broken twigs, where it crashed through the dense growth, and by occasional blood splotches on the dead leaves.

Evidently the animal was painfully wounded and bleeding more than a little, but its speed in disappearing was discouraging, and the only hope lay in its rapid weakening and failure.

Carton ran and struggled through the jungle growth for a mile or more, losing the trail at times, and then finding it again. In one place there was a pool of blood, indicating that the moose had stopped there to rest, but the smaller splotches went on, and led the trailer deeper and deeper into the wilderness.

Once he caught sight of the wild fugitive, far ahead on a hillside in a narrow, open glade. It was running still, but showed signs of exhaustion and wavering. It disappeared again among the trees, and a moment later a gunshot rang out in the very direction it had taken.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Carton. "I wonder if there are two men on the track of every animal in the State?"

He made a short cut to the clearing, and plunged into the dark forest as near as he could to the point where the creature had faded from view. When he came upon the moose, it lay dead on the dry leaves, and a man stood triumphantly beside it, with one foot on the carcass, and a rifle in his hands.

"Waal, I got the bull, an' you're next!" said the man, grinning, and Carton recognized him as one of his visitors of the previous night. It was evident that the forest was picketed by the vigilant, self-appointed wardens.

Carton advanced, with as much nonchalance as possible, close to the deer.

"I didn't know the people made their own laws so near to Bangor," he said easily. "I didn't know they assumed the right to inflict capital punishment."

"Ain't no laws about it," snapped the man. "We jest have ter pertect our own rights. The sheriff knows what's healthy fer 'im, an' don't snoop 'round here much. B'sides, if some dude gets shot up here, it stands ter reason with the sheriff thet some other dude shot 'im.

"There's 'nother blame' fool from the city 'round here now, an' he tried a shot at yer only last night. It's a plain case."

Carton smiled.

"You fellows keep pretty close tabs, don't you?" he said. "I didn't know you took in the little incident last night. You had a chance then to see what I do to people that try shots at me."

"Sure, we had yer spotted all the time," answered the man. "We'd 'tended to yer then, but the other feller took a hand in it, so we held off ter give 'im a chance."

Carton had drawn as near the man as he dared, without exciting suspicion, and, making well of the slight chance, he suddenly swung the butt of his rifle sharply against the stock of the other man's gun. The woodsman had foreseen no such contingency, and was holding the gun lightly, so it flew from his hands, and landed a good twenty feet from him.

Then, trusting to his hands and head, the city man dropped his rifle, and grappled with the brawny woodsman, who was surprised almost into inaction.

There was no question of the relative strength of the two. The creature of the woods was one with the iron-muscled moose and other wild things. But Carton was no stranger to the wrestling mat and boxing ring, and he opened the encounter with a telling hold that well-nigh demoralized his opponent.

Beside the carcass of the moose they

fell, locked in an embrace too warm for friendship, and writhed fiercely on the ground like battling reptiles.

The woodsman broke the hold presently by sheer strength, and the fight waxed more furious. Getting one arm free for an instant, Carton struck a stunning blow under the man's ear, over the jugular, and felt him relax. Following up the advantage, he rained blows upon the jaw and face, battering the ugly countenance into shapelessness.

But animals do not yield as readily as creatures of more delicate clay, and the half-senseless brute wrapped his wiry legs and arms about his antagonist, and struggled with unabated energy. At a sudden turn, Carton's right arm was twisted under him, crippling him for a moment, and the reviving woodsman, seeing the chance, drove one of his sledge-hammer fists into the sensitive midriff of the more delicately built man, driving the breath from his body.

Carton relinquished his hold, and lay inert, gasping, and the woodsman, cursing sulphurously, scrambled to his feet, and staggered eagerly toward his gun, which lay ready about a rod away.

At such times the wits seem to work independent of the body, and Carton, almost helpless, saw the movement, and perceived the design of his enemy. Still hauling for breath, he rolled over, and clutched at his revolver, which lay upon the ground, where it had fallen from the holster at his hip, unperceived by the other man.

The woodsman reached his gun, and seized it, but, as he turned, with fiendish malevolence on his discolored, disfigured face, Carton shot him between the neck and shoulder, and he went down, and lay without moving.

CHAPTER X.

COLD COMFORT.

It was raining hard now, and Carton stood up, unsteadily at first, and let the cool water beat upon his throbbing head. His clothing was torn and disarranged, but he readjusted it after a fashion, and assembled his scattered arms and accouterments.

Presently he went over to the fallen foe, and examined his wound. It did admirably as a deterrent to further action, but did not seem to be of a fatal nature, in itself. He tore strips from the man's own coat, and bound up the wound as best he could.

"Now," he said, "I think you can lie there and cool off a bit. Surely these fellows can take care of their own."

His compass was crushed in his pocket, and the sun was gone for the day; so he set out with little idea of bearings, but with an eagerness to get away from a plainly unhealthful neighborhood.

It was almost dark when he came suddenly upon a definite trail, and he took it joyfully, knowing that it must lead him somewhere, soon or late. There was a noise of something moving ahead of him, and he stepped behind a large pine and waited with his rifle ready.

A sinister, bulky fellow came marching along the trail, a shotgun held lightly across his forearm.

"Hands up!" ordered Carton, stepping back into the trail and aiming straight at the man's breast.

The man dropped the gun, and obeyed the command meekly, taken absolutely off his guard.

"Now, you may go on," said Carton. "Keep to the trail as long as you're in sight of me, or I'll shoot. Somewhere back there—I don't know where any more than you do—you may find one of your precious friends. I met him a little while ago, and he got the worst of it. He needs you, I think, and pretty badly."

The man started along sullenly.

"Yer havin' pretty good luck fer a greenhorn, ain't ye?" he said savagely. "But wait till we git ye! Jest wait, young man!"

Carton watched him until he passed out of sight. Then he caught up the man's gun, flung it as far as he could into the bush, and started on again, going as fast as his strained muscles would allow, for he did not know how

soon the man behind him might summon others to aid in a pursuit.

Black darkness came, and Carton had to go slowly to keep the trail. He judged that it was about the middle of the evening when he came upon a pond, and, skirting it, found a more welcome thing—an open shack, built there for the convenience of hunters.

The driving rain had not penetrated to the rear of the shack, and the almost exhausted man found dry leaves there upon which he could rest. He laid quietly for a time, but the chill went to his marrow, and he shook until his teeth chattered. He dared not light a fire at first, but on reflection decided that the woodsmen probably would give up any search for him until daylight; discretion weakens under physical suffering.

He found dead trees by the pond, and carefully stripped the bark from them with his knife, to get at the dry wood. Collecting a small armful, he arranged it under the shelter of the shack, and coaxed it into a feeble flame with some of the dry leaves of his bed, some powder extracted from a rifle shell, and three matches from his water-tight match box. Once it was burning, the fire thrived encouragingly, and by its light he collected more dry wood, until he had a pile that promised to last the night through. But he did not allow the blaze to mount too high, for a light that might be seen at some distance was far from desirable.

The warmth put new courage into him, and he sat boldly beside the fire, with his rifle across his lap, and tried to forget his growing hunger in the more cheerful thought of the coming dawn and his return to a safer place.

It was probably after midnight that he was roused from a doze into which he had fallen by a voice from the other side of the fire.

Still half asleep, he sprang to his feet with a cry, and leveled his rifle at the visitor.

"Don't shoot! Don't shoot!" cried the stranger. "Great heavens! And is this what they call a peaceful country? I come here for rest and quiet, and I find nothing but war and rumors of war."

Carton blinked, and peered at the man over the still-leveled rifle. He appeared to be a disheveled and ragged tramp. He was hatless, his face was dirty and badly scratched by briers, and his clothing was torn in many places.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" demanded Carton warily.

The tramp laughed aloud.

"You're memory is short, my friend," he said, with unwarrantable cheerfulness.

"I am—well, I am the man it pleased you to call 'Dinkelspiel' only yesterday. To-day I have had even worse experiences than those of yesterday. Now I am lost, and I am weary and very hungry."

Carton laughed almost hysterically in his relief. He threw down his rifle recklessly, and advanced to meet the bedraggled wanderer.

"Welcome, Dinkelspiel!" he cried. "You're the only friend I have north of Boston. Come in out of the wet, and I'll treat you to the finest pile of dried leaves in the State of Maine."

CHAPTER XI.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS.

It turned out that the mysterious Dinkelspiel had been lost in the woods ever since leaving Carton on the previous day. He had failed to find his own camp, and had wandered fruitlessly nearly all night, all day, and part of another night. His temperament was an odd mixture of the phlegmatic and the emotional, and the blind terror of the hopelessly lost had not yet come to him.

The two men sat by the fire, and talked comfortably, comparing their respective troubles.

"You are a stranger to the region like myself," said Dinkelspiel, "but you have not told me your name or whence you come."

"That's easy," laughed Carton. "I am a man of no importance to any one in particular, so I will tell you my real name. I am Phillip Carton, and I live, once in a while, in Washington."

"Are you a connection of Henry Carton, the ex-ambasasdor?" asked the other.

"I am his son," answered Carton, "but pray don't hold that against him, old chap."

"I have met your father," said Dinkelspiel, "and I—— Look! Look!"

His eyes became suddenly wild, and his face went white as he pointed at something behind Carton.

Carton jumped to his feet, and looked around. And there, just beyond the circle of firelight, was a yellow face above the bushes, and two keen eyes peering out from beneath a black slouch hat.

The new arrival looked like almost anything but a Maine woodsman. He was swarthy as a Latin, and had jet-black hair upon his head and face, but his dress was more Northern in character, and he looked for all the world like an Ellis Island immigrant.

"What do you want here?" demanded Carton, holding his rifle in a threatening position.

The man took a step forward, and uttered a few guttural words in some unrecognizable dialect.

"Look out!" screamed Dinkelspiel suddenly. "Don't let him come any nearer!"

Carton caught the note of alarm in his companion's voice, and perceived, by a sudden flare of the firelight, that the mysterious intruder held a long, gleaming dirk in his right hand.

Without hesitation, Carton raised his rifle and fired at the hand that held the dangerous weapon. The dark man uttered a wild yell, dropped the dirk, and disappeared in the darkness of the forest.

CHAPTER XII.

SHROUDED IN MYSTERY.

"That was a splendid shot, Carton," said Dinkelspiel hoarsely. "It probably saved my life."

"That fellow must have trailed us here," said Carton. "Now, why did he do it? I never saw him before, and he doesn't look like a native of these parts. Was he a friend of yours?"

Dinkelspiel shook his head dolefully. "Hardly," he said. "I do not think I ever saw him, but he knew me, I dare say. He was after *me*, not you, Carton. I am a dangerous man to associate with. There are desperate men on my track, it seems, and they will not spare even innocent strangers whom they find in my company."

"By Jove!" said Carton, "you must be in pretty bad. I thought I had all the trouble that was being handed out."

"Well, we're alive, anyway," said Dinkelspiel, "and I am still healthy enough to be madly hungry."

"It is almost morning," Carton said, without much enthusiasm. "We will look for that blasted trail, and make another try for my unlucky camp. We may find it in ruins, but when I left it there was food there, and I don't know of any other place to obtain anything. The restaurant service hereabouts is extremely inadequate."

Dinkelspiel laughed.

"You are a man after my own heart," he said. "It does me good to see a man preserve his sense of humor in the midst of adversity and confusion."

The darkness presently gave way to the gray of early dawn, and as soon as the light made it possible to seek the trail, the two men set forth.

"I cannot understand all this warfare," remarked Dinkelspiel, as they marched. "I supposed this was a land of perpetual peace, especially in this section of it."

"And so did I," replied Carton, smiling bitterly. "It looks as though there were some bickerings which do not get into the newspapers. I really didn't think it possible to get into such a mess in the State of Maine, but I have ample proof that I'm mixed up in something more than a practical joke."

He went on to relate to his companion the circumstances and details of his extraordinary experience, and in the conversation he evinced some curiosity as to the manner in which the other had become involved in similar difficulties.

Dinkelspiel's answers were short and palpably evasive. He seemed to know

nothing of the troubles over the game laws or the feud between the property owners and woodsmen. He intimated, however, that his troubles were of a nature more personal, and so shrouded in mystery that he could give no clear explanation of them.

The sun rose, and the wanderers finally struck a trail familiar to Carton. They followed it for an hour, and came at last to the bungalow, still intact and apparently free from unfriendly visitors.

The door was open, but things were much the same as Carton had left them, except that the food and supplies had been taken away; nothing remained but the furniture and cooking utensils.

Dinkelspiel was childishly disappointed. For the moment a breakfast was the one desirable thing in life. There was nothing to do but draw upon nature's stores; so Carton took his rifle, went back into the woods, and bagged a rabbit. Fortunately they were able to cook it; otherwise it must have been eaten just as nature bestowed it upon them. Flour, salt, and everything in the nature of food had been taken or thrown away by the marauders.

"And the next thing is some real sleep," said Dinkelspiel, after the rude breakfast. "It is so long since I was under a real roof, that this place seems like a palace."

"Go ahead, and sleep a couple of hours," said Carton. "I'll wake you after that and take a nap myself. Everything looks peaceful around here now, but that very circumstance is ominous."

"Oh, what a country!" groaned Dinkelspiel dejectedly. "What a place for quiet and rest. My word, I will go next to Central America. There they make no pretense of peace, but there is little bloodshed in their wars; they play at fighting."

CHAPTER XIII.

OMINOUS SIGNS.

Dinkelspiel slept like a tired child, and Carton found it no simple task to keep awake and alert in the balmy warmth of the mild autumn noon. His rifle stood ready in a corner, and he sat on a chair near one of the windows, which commanded a broad view of the approaches on two sides of the bungalow. From time to time he got up and took observations from other windows, but the woodland silence was the same on all sides, and its monotony brought the inevitable drowsiness.

About an hour after the watch began, Carton started up in his chair with the realization that he had been nodding. Overwhelmed with chagrin at his breach of vigilance, he sprang out of the chair to make the rounds of the windows again, and, like nothing more than the flicker of an eyelash, he caught a glimpse of something disappearing.

With a cry, he sprang for his rifle, and hurried to the window, taking due care not to expose himself unnecessarily. Peering cautiously around the side of the casing, he could see nothing immediately outside the window, but when his eyes were raised to the clearing beyond, he discerned two strangers standing half concealed in the edge of the woods.

"I—I say, what's amiss now?" inquired Dinkelspiel sleepily from where he sat on the edge of the cot, having half roused himself at Carton's cry of alarm.

"Sh! Here are some new actors in the drama," answered Carton softly. "Come here and tell me if they are friends of yours."

Dinkelspiel blinked, and came partly out of his trance under the anxiety of the moment. He went to the window, and looked over Carton's shoulder.

"Yes, they are looking for me, without a doubt," he said, in a hoarse whisper. "I never saw either of them before, but I know the type."

"What type?" demanded Carton bluntly.

"Never mind," replied the other. "It really concerns me only, except in so far as you have become involved with me. I know I am in great danger, and you will do well to leave me and protect yourself."

Carton laughed mirthlessly.

"It's pretty near an even thing, as far as I can see," he said. "It appears that we have each a separate band of devoted hunters on our trail, but I can see little difference in our respective predicaments. Personally I would as soon die by a knife as a gun; the results are the same."

The two men in the fringe of the forest remained quietly in the same position for a time, apparently observing the bungalow and its surroundings minutely. But suddenly they turned, and marched away into the depths of the forest, and disappeared from view.

"That ends that scene," said Carton, with some relief. "Now for the next.

"If you don't mind, Dinkelspiel, I'll take forty winks while you mount guard. You see now the necessity of perfect vigilance. I was dozing, I am ashamed to confess, when one of those men took observations on us from the window. If I can get a few moments' sleep, I shall be fresher to go on with the guard duty, but just now I am so dead for sleep that the very excitement of our situation is not enough to keep my eyes open."

Dinkelspiel yawned prodigiously, and stretched himself, but he vowed he would keep awake and guard the camp against any surprise.

Carton stretched out on the cot, and fell immediately into a deep slumber.

CHAPTER XIV.

ASLEEP AT HIS POST.

Carton did not know what roused him, but he came suddenly awake, and it seemed to him that he had slept for a long time. He turned his head on the pillow, and saw Dinkelspiel sunk in an inert heap in his chair, sleeping as peacefully as he himself had been.

A movement of something on the floor caught his eye, and he turned his head quickly. There was a square trap door in the middle of the floor leading down to a small storage cellar, and it seemed to be the door that had moved.

He watched it intently for a moment, and then smiled again, passing off the disturbance as a mere trick of the eye. But the trap moved again, and then he saw there was no illusion. He sprang to his feet, almost overturning the cot, and the trap raised up, disclosing to his astonished gaze a man with a revolver in each hand.

It was one of the familiar woodsmen, and he stepped up from the ladder onto the floor, covering Carton the while in a businesslike manner, and was promptly followed by another man.

Carton sank down upon the cot with an air of surrender.

"Well?" he said dully.

"I reckon we got ye this time," said the man with the two guns, grinning with a sinister leer.

"You seem to have a temporary advantage," said Carton.

"Wha—what's this?" cried Dinkelspiel suddenly, startled out of slumber by the voices.

The man trained one of the guns upon him.

"I was jes' remarkin' to yer friend that we'd got yer this time," he said. "Don't neither of yer make a move; I'd hate ter kill yer sudden like."

Dinkelspiel buried his face in his hands, and bewailed the situation. "It's all my fault, Carton," he said miserably. "I was false to my trust. I ought to die for it."

"Guess we c'n accommodate yer if yer hankerin' fer death," said the man of the guns humorously.

"What do you wish us to do?" demanded Carton. "You've got us, I admit, but there are laws in the State of Maine, and power to enforce them, and I don't see what satisfaction you can get from merely baiting us in this fashion."

"You'd better keep quiet a while, sonny," said the man. "There's a bunch o' fellers out scouring around fer yer, and I calc'late we'll jes' have to get 'em rounded up before the show begins. They ain't none of 'em would like to miss it."

The man possessed himself of the rifles, and prepared to hold the two prisoners under careful surveillance.

Carton was silent and very thought-

ful, but Dinkelspiel could not long be patient.

"I will make you a proposition," he cried suddenly. "You and your friends aparently have, or fancy you have, a grievance against Mr. Carton, and I am in some way included in it. Now, there must be some way of settling the matter without all this dramatic action."

"Cut out the big talk!" replied the man with the two guns. "We ain't specially cravin' fer money. How 'bout the poor feller this man, Cart'n, shot ter pieces back yender in the woods? There ain't no money c'n make up fer things like that!"

"It is idle to talk," interrupted Carton, rising from the cot; "I have been parleying with these fellows for days, to no purpose. They are fanatical upon the subject of what they call their rights. Until we can get in touch with the law, we must fight the thing out as best we can."

The two woodsmen grinned contentedly, and Dinkelspiel shook his head, unable to understand the situation. There was a long silence, and then footsteps came near the house.

One of the men grasped a rifle, and sprang to the door.

"It's all right; it's the fellers come back," he called to his comrade. And then he lifted up his voice, and announced to those outside that victory was theirs at last, and that, instead of one prisoner, there were two.

CHAPTER XV.

A BOLT FROM THE BLUE.

Five men came into the room—weary-looking fellows, bedraggled and ill-humored.

"I'm right glad this show is 'bout over," said one of them, eying the prisoners malevolently.

"On the contrary, it seems to be approaching the climax," said Carton.

"Th' less you shoot off yer mouth, th' better for ye," warned another woodsman.

Dinkelspiel spoke with some coolness and earnestness.

"I really don't know what this is all about, my good men," he said, "but, although I am a traveler from another country, I know enough of the laws and customs of this land to realize that your actions are most irregular and in dangerous defiance of the authorities. You can't annoy and persecute a man of Mr. Carton's importance with impunity, you know. It is true that we are far from any settlement, and it seems that we are in your hands, but the arms of the law are far-reaching."

"The law won't know nothin' 'bout it," chuckled the man who had first come through the trap. "The law is up to us fer the time bein'. These fool hunters from the city are allus shooting each other up, an' when somebody finds you two here, or what's left of yer, it'll be put in the papers as jest another fool acc'dent."

"I don't see no need o' puttin' this here feller out th' way, Lem," interrupted one of the men. "He hain't done nothin' much ter rile us."

"That's 'bout as much head as you got, Eph," returned the one addressed as Lem. "You shake this dude by the hand an' send 'im off to go 'n' tell the sheriff all 'bout th' whole case. It's too consarned bad thet a feller has to be done erway with 'count o' the comp'ny he keeps, but it's the way of all natur'."

"By Jove, the joke has gone far enough!" exclaimed Carton. "You fools have certainly sense enough to know you can't act like wild Indians. I've done nothing to you, and all that I want now is to get away and out of your beastly State. If you want to get rid of me, I'm quite ready to go, I assure you."

"What about th' pore feller ye shot back here a piece?" demanded the fellow called Lem. "Prob'ly he'll die—looks like it, anyhow—d'ye think we don't do nothin' 'bout such a thing as thet?"

"Aw, quit chewin' th' rag!" blurted a big, burly woodsman. "These city fellers'll talk like lawyers all day an' all night. Do what yer goin' ter, and hev done!"

"Tie 'em up," ordered Lem. "They're

too fresh, anyhow, an' the young feller's a scrapper."

"Don't let them touch you!" whispered Carton to his companion, and squared himself for a last stand.

The big woodsman fetched a rope from a corner of the room, and advanced toward the prisoners with cool deliberation.

The other captors closed in slowly and warily, and Carton and Dinkelspiel drew back against the wall.

It was nearing dusk, and the light in the bungalow was dim. No sound came from the surrounding woods but the twilight notes of the birds, and an ominous silence settled upon the men in the house.

When the man with the rope was within six feet of the prisoners, Carton suddenly sprang forward, and landed a hard fist upon the point of his jaw. He was taken utterly by surprise, and went backward and down like a log.

Instantly there was a concerted rush, and a wild mêlée ensued, with the two city men fighting with all the strength and fierceness of despair. Some of the woodsmen still held their rifles, and they tried to club them, but only succeeded in endangering the heads of their fellows.

The odds were discouraging—seven against two—but in some cases, in close quarters, numbers are not as potent as they might seem. The superior force is unwieldy and hampering to itself. Three of the woodsmen could doubtless have settled the matter sooner than the seven, in the confusion and wild excitement.

Dinkelspiel lacked some of the fine physical development of Carton, but the latter noted, even in his excitement, that his friend fought like a lion at bay, and gave blow for blow without a sign of weakening.

Suddenly a cowhide boot of large caliber was planted with crushing force in the sensitive diaphragm of Dinkelspiel. He doubled up with a cry and a gasp, and immediately the butt of a rifle crashed upon his head, and he fell against the wall, and sank to the floor.

Carton made a wild grab for the rifle, and wrenched it from the owner's hands. Blows and kicks landed upon him from head to foot, but he swung the weapon furiously, and for an instant cleared a space about him.

"Shoot 'em! Blast 'em! Shoot!" yelled Lem.

And as if in answer to his command, a thunderclap like a salvo of artillery struck the bungalow, and threw every man prone upon the floor.

CHAPTER XVI.

A DOUBTFUL RESCUE.

Carton vaguely realized that he was conscious, and he moved his limbs experimentally, and turned over.

Wreckage of all descriptions was piled about him, and the full yellow light of late sunset streaming about him showed that a good half of the bungalow and its entire front was torn away and obliterated.

A woodsman crawled painfully from beneath a conglomerate heap of splintered furniture and building material. "Day o' judgment! God a' mercy!" he groaned, and cast a look of terror upon Carton.

Carton arose to a sitting posture, and looked for Dinkelspiel. He was lying where he had fallen when hit with the rifle butt, and a stream of blood was trickling from an ugly scalp wound. There was some of the wreckage piled upon him, but he seemed to have suffered less from the explosion than the recent fight.

Carton crawled toward him, and called out his name hoarsely; and the terrified woodsman, alternately praying and cursing, fought with the weight of débris to free himself.

"Schtill! Don't move!" A clear, commanding voice came from somewhere above Carton, and he turned in astonishment, and looked up into the face of one of the foreign-looking men he had seen in the clearing a few hours before.

The man held a revolver in his

hand, pointed threateningly at Carton, and just behind him were two other men with revolvers covering the struggling woodsman.

"Well?" gasped Carton weakly.

"Don' move!" ordered the newcomer again. "You all right. No fight."

He kept Carton covered with the revolver, and advanced to the side of the unconscious Dinkelspiel. For a moment he bent over him, placing a hand upon his breast over the heart. Then he stood up, and glanced at his two companions with a wild, joyous look of fierce satisfaction in his face.

"The great Little Bear, he is dead! For God and Russia!" he cried in the Russian language, and Carton understood him.

At that moment there came from the woods the sound of tramping feet and crackling twigs.

The three dynamiters started, and looked at each other, apprehension showing in their faces.

"Come!" said one of them. "The work is done. Come away!"

The man who had first spoken turned uncertainly as if to go, but hesitated, and looked at the still form of Dinkelspiel. Then he hastily drew a long, bright dirk from under his coat, and sprang toward the apparently dead man.

"Make sure! All sure!" he muttered.

He raised the dirk over Dinkelspiel's breast, but Carton writhed with instinctive horror, and made a wild struggle to gain his feet. The movement disconcerted the assassin, and he turned. But Carton made a desperate effort, and seized the arm that held the knife.

The man struck him in the face with his free hand, and wrenched madly to loosen his grip.

At the same time, the other two foreigners leaped forward with cries of rage.

"Hey! Quit that! Cut it out!" yelled a good Yankee voice near at hand.

The three foreigners paused, and looked around in alarm.

There, within two rods of them, stood a dozen determined farmers with rifles and shotguns, under command of the stalwart sheriff of the county, and a man whom Carton instantly recognized as an agent of the secret service, from Washington.

And at a second glance, Carton perceived another man, in trim Norfolk suit and gaiters—Captain Hargowitz, military attaché of the Russian legation at Washington.

Carton ceased his struggle with the assassin, who now stood dazed and uncertain with the knife in his hand, gazing at the threatening muzzles of the deputies' guns. And Carton sank back upon the ground, and yielded the responsibilities to the rescuers.

CHAPTER XVII.

HIS HIGHNESS.

The secret-service man stepped forward without a word, and clapped a pair of handcuffs upon the wrists of the dumb, unresisting assassin. At the same time the sheriff and three deputies advanced, and secured the other two desperadoes.

Carton looked up at the face of the secret-service man, and laughed whimsically.

"I guess it's more of a laughing matter than it was, Mr. Carton," said the detective. "I'm Barnes, of the secret service. I guess we wouldn't have been much use five minutes later. Take some of this."

He handed a flask of brandy to Carton, and the latter took it gratefully.

"Gi—give him some. I don't think he's dead," he said, nodding toward the motionless form of Dinkelspiel.

The officer from the Russian legation now seemed to see the form of Dinkelspiel for the first time. He cried out wildly, and rushed to it, brushing away the débris, and clasping the man in his arms.

"Your Highness!" he cried, "can't you see me? Can't you speak to me? See, it's Hargowitz—your friend. Oh, gentlemen, what a madness it was for him to leave us and come to this fright-

ful place by himself. We warned him, but he was headstrong."

"What's he talking about, Barnes?" asked Carton curiously, with a weak and petulant quaver. "That—that's my friend Dinkelspiel."

"You're mistaken. It's the Grand Duke Kurt," said the detective. "He left his friends in Washington, in sort of an independent huff, to go out and see the country for himself. We knew the Nihilists were after him, and we've been trailing him for two weeks. If he's still alive, it's no credit to us or him."

"He breathes! He breathes!" cried Captain Hargowitz. "He has only a wound in the head. Where's that doctor we had? His Highness must have attention."

"The doctor's back at the farmhouse, where we started," said the detective. "We'll take His Highness and hustle back there as fast as we can. But who are all these dead and wounded around here, Mr. Carton? You must have had something doing here, with a vengeance!"

Carton sat up again, and looked around him.

"Oh, I forgot," he said whimsically. "My—my head's so full of things, you know. M'm! You'd better arrest some of 'em, Barnes, if they're not all dead, an' I guess they're not. They're my own personal nihilists—Yankee variety. Got a feud with Congressman Harris. Tried to kill me for a poacher. Bad lot—all of 'em!"

"There's more here than we can straighten out in a month of Sundays, sheriff!" said the astonished secret-service man. "But I must take care of the grand duke—that's my job.

"I'll take a few of your men to get His Highness back to the farmhouse, and I wish you'd round up the rest of the wounded and report to me with them later in the day. Then we'll try to thrash the thing out somehow."

Next morning the secret-service agent came into the room of the little Maine farmhouse, where Carton sat bolstered up in an easy-chair, swathed in bandages, but looking more contented than he had for days.

"His Highness wants to see you, if you're able to get into his room, Mr. Carton," he said. "He's still pretty sick, but the doctor says he'll be all right. And he insists on seeing you if you're able to move."

Carton smiled and struggled to his feet with groans and grimaces of exquisite pain. The detective took his arm, and helped him across the floor and into the room of the royal sick man.

"Hello, Carton! Thank God, we're both here!" said a weak, but cheery, voice.

Carton bowed to him with more formality in his manner than he had deemed necessary when his friend was plain Mr. Dinkelspiel.

"Your Highness, I also thank Heaven!" he answered solemnly. "I hope——"

"Oh, cut out the highness, Carton!" interrupted the grand duke petulantly. "I'm Dinkelspiel, old chap. Haven't we been through enough together to forget such things as highnesses? You're Carton—I'm Dinkelspiel. I won't stand any beastly homage from an American that dared to knock me down and browbeat me as you did in the forest."

"Thank you, *Dinkelspiel*," murmured Carton awkwardly. "I'm glad to have had you for a friend. And, by Jove, we fought a good fight, didn't we? It was a close call, but I wouldn't have missed it all for a fortune!"

The grand duke smiled appreciatively. "And we'll fight other good fights, some day, perhaps," he said quietly. "I'm not going to give you up, my friend. Mr. Barnes says you're a diplomat yourself, and I'll show you that I've got some power with your government. You may not care for Russia—there is not as much excitement there as here in Maine—but you will land there at the American legation, if I know how to pull wires, as you Americans say."

Dice of Destiny

By Garnet Warren

So tiny you find it pretty hard to point out on the map—and one man the boss of it. That describes partly the little republic figuring in this story. It might have been called Defaulters' Snug Harbor, so cosy and safe was it for fugitive gentlemen given to mistaking other people's money for their own. That once under the wing of this wee state, they were able to laugh at pursuers from abroad, has much to do with the events of this remarkable story.

CHAPTER I.

A COMMENCEMENT.

THE clock in the great offices of Pritchard, Lippman & Co., investors and brokers, pointed to a few minutes past twelve as Crawford Henneker, cashier, came from the inner shrine of the directors, passed the great central corridor, set like a highway between departments, and entered his "cage."

In the adjacent section sat a man—tall, athletic, dark—with peculiarly masklike features. The cashier turned toward him.

"Did you get that stuff off, Charlie?" he questioned.

The younger man replied with a gesture of vexation.

"By George!" said he, "I haven't had a minute since you went inside. Things seemed to come in a stream——"

Henneker drummed on the desk with his fingers, a little cloud of vexed concern shadowing his face.

"It doesn't matter, but it ought to have been deposited," he broke in. "A hundred and ten thousand dollars is too much to keep locked up over Sunday."

"Some of our big people were in," interrupted the younger man, in further explanation. "Old Kimberley, from the West, came, and wouldn't let me go. I didn't know how to get rid of him."

Henneker gave a final and decisive roll of fingers on the desk before him as he looked at the clock.

"Well, it can't be helped, I suppose," he said. "You want to be more careful in future. It's past twelve now, and it's too late for the bank. We'll have to keep it here till Monday morning. If it's deposited then, first thing, I guess it'll be all right, but——"

He shook his head in emphasized anxiety over the magnitude of the amount that the office must harbor through two nights and days.

It was for deposit, to meet nine or ten checks drawn against the firm for dividends, and, as he had been called into conference with one of the partners shortly after eleven o'clock, he had directed Charles Underhill, his assistant, to deposit it in the bank that handled the firm's money.

Crawford Henneker rose from his stool, and approached the other.

"Where is it?" he asked.

Underhill opened a drawer, and there, almost filling it, and ranged in packages of five thousand each, lay the money; the clean bills marshaled like an army.

Henneker nodded as he took the view.

"Well," he said, with a final frown of concern, "there it is, and I suppose we'll have to keep it. We'll be properly formal about the thing, anyhow, as it's better to take no chances. I'll get Mr. Lippmann. He'd better see it put away, and he can change the combination himself."

He walked once more to the directors' room, and presently returned with one of the partners.

Lippmann was a sharp-faced, brisk-mannered man, keen as a blade and scrupulous as success in business called

for. His one fixed star was his utter faith in the conscience and probity of Henneker, his cashier.

At his entrance, he nodded crisply that he was ready, and Underhill busied himself with the money. Each bundle he carefully lifted, and, keeping careful count of the amount marked upon it, made two larger bundles, which he tied with tape. He handed them to Lippmann, and the three men proceeded to the immense safe sunk into the wall of Lippmann's own office.

That safe seemed giantlike, titan in its huge solidity and strength. It seemed impervious to a merely human form of entry. It seemed almost as if it might defy time itself.

Lippmann opened the steel door, and carefully placed the packets in a large inner compartment; then changed the combination and snapped the lock—the most intricate that modern ingenuity could achieve.

Sealed within that fortress, the money seemed safe as anything of man's might be. With an elaborate watchman system, with an intricate and interwoven burglar alarm, the money was guarded with greater efficiency than if embedded within rock.

Lippmann chuckled.

"I think it ought to be safe enough in there," said he, putting his keys in his pocket. "Although, Underhill," he added, with the sudden commercial instinct for utter certainty that had been greatly a reason for his success, "you must keep a more careful proportion between things in future. Big affairs before little ones in business, my friend. Take a cigar."

He looked at his watch, and hurried away, while the other two men viewed his fair-humored departure with relief.

Friends in social life, they gave themselves to anticipation of the week-end fishing trip which had been planned for that day, and for which twin dress-suit cases had been bought in the forenoon.

From outside, creeping through the high-set windows of the vast office, the glories of the day seemed to beckon.

"Hurry and wash up," said Henneker. "Let's get out to that!"

He gestured at the life of the day, and Underhill glowed at the sight.

"In a moment," said Underhill, and walked briskly to his cage—a peculiar exhilaration upon him, a glint brighter than the shine of brilliants in his eyes.

Once within, he looked about him at the office, on which suddenly it seemed the peace of summer Saturday afternoons had fallen; at seats and at mahogany desks deserted; at spaces of floor, on which in the distance, near the door, some stragglers' feet hastened away. It was a keen, quick look.

Then he turned attention to his new suit case, opened it, and unlocked a drawer in his desk.

For an instant he gazed, and his eyes snapped at what he saw.

Crisp and even, and methodically arranged before him, were packages of bank notes to the amount of one hundred and ten thousand dollars. They seemed the very duplicate of that money which had been so methodically locked up.

With a calm deliberation, he dropped them into the open suit case at his feet, locked it, and closed the drawer. Then he stood flushed and silently trembling.

He had planned and encompassed an ingenious robbery. The packets placed within the safe had been realities only in outer covering. Packet by packet, under shadow of the drawer that morning, he had covered white paper with genuine bills, while Henneker had been engaged with the directors. He had shown those fakes to the cashier; had handed them to Lippmann, the senior partner; had watched them locked with scrupulous care within the safe, and all this while the hundred and ten thousand of reality had awaited in his drawer a fitting opportunity for safe removal.

His emotions of reaction, however, were short. In a moment he had taken them in hand, and the mask of his poise returned.

He even caught himself chuckling a little at the whimsicality of the thought that took him at his successful accomplishment. He regretted the money

with which it had been necessary to butter the blanks that had been locked away.

Henneker's footsteps pattered back on the tiles, sounding strangely clear in the vast and now deserted space. The returning cashier heard the chuckle, and there was cordiality in his voice.

"You're happy, Charlie," he remarked. "Thinking of the good time, eh?"

"Happy as a lark," said the younger man. "I expect to have the time of my life."

His senior nodded understandingly. "Well, I guess we're both ready. Take your suit case." He took his own, and the pair departed.

CHAPTER II.

A SUMMONS.

The two friends who thus went forth presented to the eye a marked contrast of type. Handsome as Underhill was, there was something cold and unmoving about his whole expression. Henneker, oppositely, was a gay giant with broad-set eyes, balanced to the practical by a firm mouth.

"Charlie," said he, "I feel young as you to-day; I feel happy. What can a man wish more? Health, the love of work, and"—he hesitated with a touch of ingenuous embarrassment—"and the love of some one else?"

The other forced a laugh, not inexpertly.

"Now, you're going fishing, Crawford, remember. You can't fish and be sentimental. While you dream, you get baited."

The other's answering chord of laughter freed itself, and beside it the younger man's merriment rang hollow.

"I'll tell you one thing, Charlie," Henneker declared lightly; "if she were in New York now, you'd go fishing by yourself."

He sighed with a sort of humorous desolation, and added: "And, Charlie—it's awful when you can't see your girl for three months. Three months to a lovelorn swain! Think of it! If it weren't for that confounded old office, I'd be down there myself; I'd——"

"Isn't she somewhere in South America?" suddenly interrupted Underhill.

"In the Isle de Gualdo," replied Henneker.

"What! That's the island the extradition laws don't reach, isn't it?" asked the junior, with a sudden interest.

"That is its trade-mark," returned Henneker. "It's the island where the crooks of all the nations lie at ease, where the spreading vine protects anything from high financiers to second-story men. It's the one place on God's earth where, if you forge or steal or break the decalogue ten times over, you can boast of it and feel safe. Yes, that's the Isle de Gualdo—that's where Margaret is. She's got relatives there among the older families, who are steadily trying to make it like other places—though they don't meet with much success. She likes to go there. The climate agrees with her. So there's some good in the place."

The younger fellow listened with a full and easy interest.

"Some time I'll crack a safe, and go and take out citizen's papers," said he, at length; then switched the subject suddenly.

"How about this trip of ours?" he asked. "You've got it all figured out, haven't you? I always leave the trains to you, you know. Tell me what we're to do?"

"We leave the Grand Central Station at four," said Henneker. "We can check these grips then and take our time at luncheon."

He looked at his watch. "We've got three hours," he said. "Do you want to come to my hotel?"

The assistant nodded, and thoughtfully walked on; and, as they proceeded uptown, satisfaction came to him as he considered.

He was set on a high tide of spirits, which rioted till they found themselves in the eddying swirl of humanity that streamed out and into the great depot. They checked their suit cases, and returned to the dining room of Henneker's hotel for luncheon, at which

Underhill outshone his ordinarily unsparkling self.

He had taken the conversation from Henneker, and stories and experiences flowed from him. It seemed as if fishing were the only thing upon his mind and the fishing trip the one subject of the day.

It is true that Henneker looked at him somewhat in surprise, and at the generosity of the lunch he insisted on ordering, and at the quantities of sparkling Burgundy he drank, for the man was not usually a drinker. He laughed at Henneker's humorous warning.

"The day is in my blood, Crawford," said he. "It's sparkling like the wine."

It was in this spirit that they ascended to Henneker's apartment to while away the time till the departure of the train. That the younger man looked frequently at the clock struck Henneker merely as an indication of high holiday anticipations.

The cashier could not know that fishing was the last thing in his assistant's thoughts. Had the older man seen the little drama enacted in the bank, the possibility of Underhill's passage in another train, bound for very different parts, might have occurred to him.

It is not impossible that even the Isle de Gualdo might have come to his mind. These things, however, he could not know.

A bell boy knocked at the door—a bell boy who accompanied a messenger in uniform.

"Mr. Crawford Henneker?" said the latter functionary.

Henneker nodded.

"A cablegram for you, sir," said the messenger.

He handed across a boldly printed yellow envelope, at which Henneker stared for a moment—almost the premonition of some disaster in his face. Inevitably his thoughts concerning it turned to the one person about whom he so often speculated sentimentally—his fiancée. He hastily opened the envelope, and a glance at its contents shadowed his expression with concern. His half-formed, inexplicable apprehension had been pushed by verification. The telegram ran:

> Isle de Gualdo. Am in danger. Please come immediately. MARGARET.

As his eyes took the meaning of the message, they showed apprehension. Without a word, he handed the paper across to Underhill, who stared also with wide astonishment. It seemed as if a sudden tensity had, too, come to the latter's face.

"What are you going to do about it?" he inquired, in a strangely perturbed voice.

The cashier flashed a look of surprise.

"Do? Why, go!" he answered instantly. "What! Stay here when I'm needed?"

"But look here, old man," interrupted Underhill. "Won't they need you?—the office, I mean?"

For a moment Henneker's expression of surprise became emphasized. He looked strangely at his friend, ignorant of the vital import that the Isle de Gualdo had for the younger man.

"Charlie—what's come over you?" he demanded sharply.

He snapped his fingers—an indication of his nervous tension—as he crossed to the telephone and called the number of the senior partner of his firm. For a space there was a pause, and then Underhill heard his voice.

"Mr. Lippmann," said he. "I've bad news. I've received a cable from South America. It calls me down there. It's urgent. It may be a matter of life and death. . . . Yes; it is not possible for me to hesitate. . . . My fiancée. Thank you, sir—you're very good. You'll have a letter on Monday explaining fully. . . . Everything is in good shape at the office. Underhill will have no trouble. Thanks again, sir. Good-by."

He hung up the receiver, and immediately made another call—to Mario De Sonara, journalist, and brother of his fiancée.

Intent upon a possible explanation of the cable, he rang again and again, but without result.

With an exclamation of impatience, he desisted, and called the Pennsylvania Station. Here he was more successful. There was a train within the hour for Savannah, from which connections could be made with some fruit boat bound for the Isle de Gualdo.

"There's no time to lose," he said to his companion. "I'll need some things, I suppose. The fishing outfit in my new grip will hardly do. The shaving set in it is about all I can use. I'll need another—let me see."

He selected a well-worn suit case, and, hurriedly turning out his drawers and opening the closet, made a quick selection of wardrobe. He packed with thoughtful expedition, while the assistant cashier paced the room without speaking.

Then Henneker went to the small desk in the corner and wrote rapidly. Sealing the note paper in an envelope, he addressed it to Mr. Lippmann, and handed it to Underhill.

"It's just a detailed explanation of my reasons for going," said he. "Hand it in, old man, on Monday, when you go back."

Underhill took it and nodded, his jet-black eyes full on his companion. In the tension of the moment, Henneker could not notice a curious expression that came with the look.

"So it's—it's you that's going to the Isle de Gualdo," said Underhill. "How strange. I'll see you off, old man—and I can get my grip at the same time. I'm afraid the fishing trip's off for me. I'll have to go to some other place than either the Isle de Gualdo or Connecticut."

Henneker, the strain of sudden resolve taken from him, replied humorously: "You've no business in the Isle de Gualdo; your girl's here."

They took a taxi from the hotel to the Grand Central Station. There they exchanged their checks for grips, and hurried to the Pennsylvania Station for the train that waited.

And there the thief—standing on the station platform on that day of unexpected cross events—wished Godspeed to the man that was his friend—the man who, at a word, had forsaken his beaten paths of life to thrust himself, like some knight of old, into he knew not what dangerous path, at the call of his lady.

CHAPTER III.

PERPLEXITY.

Crawford Henneker was—as the world has the term—a self-made man. The son of a shopkeeper in a minor Western town, he had forged upward without either money or influence, solely through the golden qualities of brain and character.

And gifted with the magic of imagination, and balanced by sound good sense, at thirty-two he had taken the favorable attention of more than one personage whose notice was potential.

A strain of the quixotic, in fact, seemed his only weakness in the great world of affairs, and, indeed, it was a touch of this that kept him so close to Underhill.

Some early obligation to the latter's parents had made the link—an obligation long since paid—but in his heart he knew there was no spark of rugged reality about the man.

There was, Henneker felt, a trace of recklessness in his protégé. That he gamed somewhat too freely, Henneker knew, and it was the knowledge of this that was the real reason of their many fishing jaunts, as the cashier hoped by them to preserve the balance of healthy outlook in the other.

On Sunday morning he found himself at Savannah, and greatly favored in the matter of fruit-boat connection to those shining shores where it mattered less how you "got it" than that you "had it."

It was late when he arrived aboard, but at breakfast on the following morning he came to a knowledge of his fellow passengers; a Scotch engineer—sandy and broad of accent—an American drummer; three Germans of the same business, and a man with a hard, experienced pair of eyes—a European gambler.

That there were two others, he knew by the breakfast spaces set, though he

was in no particular mood for the genially social; and after the meal, going to the deck, he stood at the taffrail, and for the thousandth time gave himself up to the full sway of speculation at the sudden surprising call he had received.

There again he tried to piece together the complicated strands of his problem. The great ocean, cleft by the ruffling line of foam from the ship, stretched away, but Henneker stared across it, lost to all but his perplexities.

He was only brought back to his surrounding by a smart tap upon his shoulder and the sound of a familiar voice close to his ear.

"Why, my dear fellow, my very dear fellow——"

Henneker turned, taken once more in the grasp of the unexpected. Before him stood the one man in all the world that might give to him an explanation of the curious errand on which the cashier found himself—the man to whom he had unavailingly telephoned upon the previous day—Mario Sonaro, brother of his fiancée.

He was a straight, slim figure, with a pointed beard, an oval face, and all the apt and delicately poised mannerisms of the South American of the better class.

His face had a playfulness not often found upon American ones, though it possessed a character for thought beneath the smile. Henneker's astonishment was reflected in the other.

"Why, by the great gods!" exclaimed Sonaro, in his expansive Latin way, "isn't this splendid? How, my friend, did you——"

In an instant it seemed to Henneker that he had taken the sense of the situation. He put out his hand with a gesture cordial and frank.

"I see that we're to be brothers in arms," said he.

The South American responded with a quick, gratified intensity.

"Yes?" he returned, with interrogative inflection, "I didn't know——"

"I got a cable Saturday," continued Henneker, "and I came at once."

"What! You, too?" came back the Latin, with a swelling surprise. "I didn't think that you——"

Henneker felt a keen relief, and brightened at the thought of the immediate clearance of his perplexities. That the other should at least have an idea of the danger by which his sister was faced, the American felt assured. He showed his satisfaction in his tone as he replied:

"But I did——" He stopped, held by a curious thought. "It's strange," he continued to the South American, "that she didn't mention you in her cable—that she didn't tell me to consult with you."

It was now Sonaro's turn at extreme astonishment.

"She? Who?" he interrupted.

"Who? Who but your sister?" answered Henneker.

Sonaro stood eying Henneker, the former's well-rounded aptness for the moment gone. His narrow, oval face with its small, pointed beard seemed to lengthen with his perplexity.

"My sister—you meant my sister?" he repeated, in a sort of high, shrewd monotone.

Henneker's eyes widened in a way that seemed almost like some burlesque imitation of the other.

"Who else? Whom could I mean? Whom did you mean?" he gasped.

"The—revolution!" said Sonaro vaguely.

The two stared—stared in the center of the yellow, light-flooded deck, which the slanting sun sheeted with his rays. The blond, fat German drummers twinkled amused eyes in the distance, considering such enthusiastic surprise of the meeting to be extreme.

Henneker, however, came from his daze quickly. He took from his pocket the yellow cable that had urged him to his quest.

The other read rapidly, then went into a fusillade of strenuously rapt de Gualdan expressions.

"Something's gone wrong," he said presently in English. "I don't understand it at all. It seems that my plan has leaked, or that some fool has acted before the time. Nothing was to have

been done till I arrived. I had laid the whole thing and hoped to carry it through."

He threw, with a passionate intensity, his yellow cigarette into the water, and reverted to the moving brilliance of de Gualdan expletive.

Henneker dumbly viewed him, though his thoughts moved to the course of the other's. Unoccupied himself with the processes of revolution, he yet saw the possible relation of the two cables.

The sister was perhaps suspected of complicity in Sonaro's activities, which, obviously, had come out. Her danger, then, was pressing. The train of thought was interrupted by Sonaro, who, from expletive, had come to speculation.

"It's hard to know what to think. That there is danger somewhere is certain—but—what?"

He seemed rather to speak in an undertone to himself than to Henneker.

"Perhaps it's some move of that old fox, President Soldo. It may be that he suspects. It may be, Henneker, that this cable was sent to you through his orders. He might calculate that you would show it to me, and so make the thing seem unsuspicious—that I would come to help my sister and place myself in his clutches."

Concerned with the problem of his danger, Sonaro had been gazing at the sea and at the wheeling birds that uttered hoarse cries. He pivoted abruptly, the mechanical instinct to walk moving him. In the distance of the deck toward the stern, the three German drummers exchanged cigars and Teuton conversation; the gambler and the Scotchman lolled against the taffrail in friendly chat.

Between them, from the entrance to the saloon, emerged a passenger from breakfast. He was glowing-eyed, dark, white-toothed, with black, soft hat and black clothes, an unctuous, rolling person, who held in his hand a cigarette in a meerschaum holder.

He swelled slowly along the deck toward the pair, bowing gracefully—for such a swollen person—as he passed.

Sonaro cast another cigarette upon the waters.

"General Calco," said he, "President Soldo's panther's paw. When he seeks the Isle de Gualdo, there is, as you say in Manhattan, something doing! Whatever else that cablegram may mean, one thing is certain: It means danger."

CHAPTER IV.

AN ENCOUNTER.

Mario De Sonaro was a picturesque figure in a practical age.

With all the polish of the European educated class, he had yet absorbed from the great republic of America some of its organized energy and resoluteness.

He had turned by early choice to New York journalism, and even the Sunday supplements had been brightened by his creations.

Sonaro, however, had soon tired, and turned an imaginative mind to the Isle de Gualdo—that bright green spot of gorgeous iniquity where he was born, and in which his childhood was passed. A shining little Eden, so far as beauty went, it was a smiling, poisonous bloom, whose growth had been largely accidental.

Forgotten, apparently, by greater nations, the extradition laws had passed it by, and the gentlemen of the light finger had made of it a harborage where games of chance flourished, and where industry lost itself.

Henneker came to understand these things generally, and how Sonaro had come to be neck deep in plans of revolution from the time of the little paper that he had started, which had been suppressed.

It was one of those wet days in which the moisture clung like wraiths to the ropes, and made slippery the surfaces of the deck, however, that the specific nature of this revolution was made known to him.

The two had sought Sonaro's cabin, where were wine and yellow cigarettes, and Sonaro was engaged in the triple activity of sipping the former, smoking the latter, and staring fixedly at his

friend when the latter spoke in the bantering accent of friendship.

"Well, conspirator," said Henneker cheerfully, "what are you projecting now—a massacre?"

The other laughed, clapped Henneker on the shoulder, rose, and paced the few steps which the little white stateroom allowed.

"My friend," said he, in his eager Latin way, "I can no longer keep what you call 'bottled up.' I must speak my mind, my heart. After all, you are to be of my family——"

"Go on with your story," chaffed Henneker. "I can see you're bound to tell it to me. You couldn't hold it back, even if I were going to belong to some one else's family, you communicative little Latin."

That was the introduction. The rest was the narration by the talkative Sonaro of the details of an ingeniously considered revolution, startling in its possibility and simplicity.

Each detail was originally conceived and intelligently developed, and Henneker found himself becoming absorbed in spite of himself.

It was commencing to come to him more and more vividly that the affairs of his fiancée were connected in some way with President Soldo's purposes and with the presence of Calco, his right bower, on the ship. He felt that if—as it well might be—Margaret should be held as hostage or in vital danger, that then he would find himself in the stir of revolutionary events.

It was on a night of such excited anticipation, that, after having walked the deck alone, in the full enjoyment of the cool night air and the gleam of the moon on the quiet water, he turned below to his room.

Before him the vacant space of the saloon stretched in its crimson and white and gilt, and, in a vagrant fancy, impressed him as might some deserted palace struck to stillness by an ogre hand.

He had turned the knob of his own door, when another on the opposite tier—next to Sonaro's—opened silently. Taken by a curious surprise, he watched it, for Sonaro had spoken of it as though he knew it to be unused. The thought came curiously as the door moved. And then from it Henneker saw slowly emerge—Calco, his sleek figure contracted with caution, his wary eyes fixed upon the silent saloon. There was something slinking, inexpressibly furtive about the man, and Henneker watched with a flood of disgust, in which there was some element of chill dread. The man's mission of spying was written deep upon him. Sonaro's secrets, in which Henneker had so vital an interest, were known.

It cost the cashier but a flash of consciousness to know this, and, simultaneously, to feel the vital importance of being himself unseen. Luckily the other's eyes were not upon him, and the cashier was already within the shadow of his room.

Quickly and silently he closed the door, his veins throbbing at the consciousness of what the general's knowledge implied. It meant loss to his hopes and Sonaro's unless—— The thought came to him suddenly as a crash. Calco had not seen him. The day might yet be saved, and even with the perception came a plan which there was yet time to effect.

Next day the American bowed to Calco courteously at breakfast, and hailed Sonaro with a cheerful air. Nothing indicated that the general was aware of his knowledge, and Henneker rattled on with an apparent riot of spirits.

"The señor is light-hearted at his anticipations of landing at de Gualdo?" said Calco, his white teeth shining in his smile.

"Is not the condition common when approaching de Gualdo?" the American parried.

Once on deck with Sonaro, however, he confided to him the discovery he had come upon, and, for a little, the de Gualdan found difficulty in keeping the grip upon his features. In a moment, however, he had governed himself, and he spoke with restraint. "Then he knows our plans. He can crush us at the lifting of a finger."

"It seems so," replied Henneker. And as he spoke, Calco moved urbanely in the distance, his oily face quivering to his movement.

"It seems so, if we can't turn him," replied Henneker. "There is just one hope. I don't believe he saw me, and it makes a plan possible. Sonaro, old man, we must add to our revolutionary schemes. You understand? We must set him at fault with some important additional information that will occupy him immediately he lands. If the president finds it to be wrong, it will tend to discredit whatever other knowledge he possesses. The president will believe that we knew he was eavesdropping, and deliberately supplied him with false information. You see?"

So the plan was made. At lunch that day Sonaro incidently mentioned that he had work to do in his stateroom; and, in the sight of all, the two retired to carry through their rehearsal.

And Sonaro played well his part. Keyed to the utmost by the desperate danger in which his plans were mired, he rose to extreme simulative heights. Henneker, in a cooler Northern mood, played to the other with a perfect restraint—his every question building up the structure of the tale, and strengthening its probability.

At four they rose, their skillful work perfectly accomplished. The saloon lay empty before them as they entered it. On the deck, Calco was nowhere to be seen.

Everywhere they looked for him to make certain that he had not missed their talk, but they searched in vain. Indeed, they found him ascending the companionway from the cabin when they returned toward the rear deck. He was looking very sleepy and oily and beneficent. His teeth gleamed more brightly than the brass fittings as he spoke.

"Ah, gentlemen," said he. "The general is getting old. He overslept his siesta to-day—long overslept it." The general looked at his watch. "Half past four! Tut, tut! What a tragedy is age!"

Next day, early, they came in sight of the shore. The Isle de Gualdo seemed like some beneficent fairyland, glittering in rose and pearl against the tenderness of the sapphire sky.

High above the city rose a mountain softened by the warm veil of haze, and from its top a thin smoke stream seemed to melt into the air. Closer was the stretching wharf, the red roof tiles, the yellow and dazzling white of houses, the low, white presidential palace—those elements that made Manada the capital.

The two friends stood by the rail, and watched a boat swing out, an august official in red and yellow at its stern, rowed by uniformed Indians. He bulked himself corpulently up the companionway, his big, genial, perspiring face billowing into a great smile as he saw both Calco and Sonaro, whom he greeted in the full courtesy of the Spanish way. After the formalities, he chatted to a little group composed of Calco, Henneker, Sonaro, and the gambler, but Henneker scarcely listened.

Now that the island was before him, he felt to its full the strain of doubt and foreboding which the cablegram had brought with it, and was about to urge Sonaro to ask for news when he heard him utter his sister's name in connection with a question in which the cable was referred to.

Henneker saw a slight shadow of surprise on the official's face at the interrogation. He saw the faint vestige of a guarded perplexity on Calco's. Unable to control his anxiety at the strain, he burst in.

"Tell me," said he, "what has happened to her? What is wrong?"

The official answered briefly, a quick note of perplexity in his voice.

"She's not here," said he. "She started for New York three days before this cablegram was sent!"

CHAPTER V.

STARTLING SURPRISES.

Henneker was usually a quick man, apt in emergency, skilled against surprise. As the official spoke, however, the American's face was almost lu-

dicrous in its astonishment. His eyes were expressionless, his mouth half open. For a moment he stood so, the set picture of astonished unreadiness, while the official spoke rapidly to Sonaro.

"She was well?" Henneker managed to say, after a while.

"Never better—the commandant saw her just before she went," replied Sonaro. "She evidently intended to surprise us."

He shook his head blankly, and then withdrew from the little group.

"I don't understand it—I don't understand it," he kept repeating like some amazed automaton. "It is true that the president might have sent the cable to draw me here, but, if so, would he not have held Margaret against me as some sort of hostage if he feared revolution?" He shook his head again.

In the meantime, things about them had been stirring. Boats had gathered about the steamer, filled with a medley of de Gualdan population. One in particular, manned by energetic wavers of hands, attracted Sonaro's attention. He fluttered a handkerchief in return, and, taking Henneker apart from the rest, spoke to him in guarded tones.

"I see some of my friends in that little launch," he said, pointing to a waving group, "and it is necessary that I should join them in order to get in touch with things. Look after my luggage and expect me at the Hotel El Rey to-night or to-morrow. Till then, my friend, *adios!*"

With a keen grip of hands, he was off to his welcomers, and Henneker gave himself mechanically to the matter of the luggage and to the hiring of a small boat from among the many that waited expectant below.

And there in the stern he sat, his thoughts fixed upon the mystery of the summons so surprisingly received, so mysterious when answered. Inclined to think that in some obscure way it had relation to Sonaro's plots, he was yet puzzled that any official on the Isle de Gualdo should have known of his intended marriage, which, in a spirit of mischief, had been kept secret. But if that were not the explanation, what might it be?

The great iron wharf rose before him, while he worried at the question, and he found himself one of a picturesque throng: young dandies, whose dress would not have disgraced Paris; sweating peons, tottering under unimaginable loads; customs officials, inquisitive of your very camera interior—if you were not politic of dollars. One of the latter, however, in return for a generous gratuity, waved the señor smilingly to the freedom of Manada.

The American stepped into the sunny little street, and gazed curiously about him. The cobbled roadways seemed to smile; small, yellow houses with gilt-barred windows seemed like a line of laughing prisons. The next moment, a smiling, dark-mustached man—immaculately garbed in long frock coat and shining hat—approached.

"Mr. Henneker," he said in English, with a bow to which the American was becoming accustomed, "the Hotel El Rey welcomes you. Would you do me the honor——"

He indicated a compact touring car, in which sat a chauffeur with a tendency to regalia, and—in the rear seat—a clean-cut, muscular, Spanish-looking person. To Henneker the welcome was unexpected.

"You are very good," said he. "You are——"

"One of the managers," answered the gentleman. He turned to the peon, who, loaded with Sonaro's trunks, stood at expectant attention.

"This is some of my friend's luggage," began Henneker.

"I see," said the manager. "The fellow can take those along. These we can take comfortably with us." He indicated the grips, and Henneker, for all his perplexity, was cheered by the unexpected welcome—pleasant, even while commercial.

"I had not expected——" he began again.

"We are very up to date here, I can assure you," replied the manager, adjusting his black pearl pin. "Our peculiar class of trade asks for the best."

He seemed to appreciate his joke as the machine moved at a good speed over the cobbled roadway, and Henneker was enabled to get his first impressions of the capital of the island.

He saw its low, bright houses, its tiled sidewalks, its glimpses of color and rich costume, its dark, exotic-looking people mingled with pure white—of whom so many seemed marked by the taint of an indefinable evil.

Then subtly came a change in the character of the town—the doorways unclean and squalid, the faces nakedly villainous, when robbed of the chastening benefits of wealth—till the houses thinned and the people became scattered. They followed a rising road.

Henneker had little noticed the flight of time. Now, however, he was conscious that he had touched the lip of the country. The grass was green, while here and there, peeping out from some shadowed clump, were dark, astonished faces.

He took out his watch with a sudden expression of realization. Suddenly, however—ere his surprise could voice itself in words—he felt the grip of hands upon him from behind, and—his wrists drawn together—the sensation of cold encircling iron upon them. Then he heard a quick, metallic snap, and knew that he was handcuffed.

At the same instant, the tall man clucked with his mouth, and spoke.

"Sorry for these incivilities, Henneker," he said easily, "but they were quite necessary."

He smiled openly into Henneker's face, while the cashier stared dumbly at the man. The quick, surprising crash of events had for the moment overcome him, and he seemed hardly to realize what had happened. His unreadiness lasted, however, but for a moment. It passed through his mind instantly that Calco had lost no time in suppressing the incipient revolution, and he knew that he was in the meshes of serious trouble. These thoughts troubled him, though he spoke with a perfect collectedness.

"Of course, you know what you're doing, and I know you're only fulfilling orders," he said, "but look here. I'm an American citizen, and there's likely to be trouble from this."

He had hoped for some effect from the speech, but the tall man only laughed with evident and assured heartiness, while Henneker heard a chuckle from behind.

"Henneker," remarked the tall man, "it's all up. We've got you, and we're going to keep you. What's the use of bluffing when you haven't got the cards?"

Henneker was controlled now.

"None at all," he answered. "But do you suppose you've got the cards? Do you suppose this miserable little republic of yours—an outcast to every civilized nation on earth—has got the cards in this particular instance—even if I have been plotting revolution, which I suppose you think. Do you suppose for a moment that, with the sort of government you put up here, it would count with the government of the United States? Why, man, you're crazy. My friends know that I've come here. They expect immediate word from me, and, if they don't get it, they'll start inquiries—that's all. And if they do begin to move, what do you suppose will happen to your little establishment here?"

Henneker spoke amiably, and with a tolerable countenance, which effectively cloaked the real doubt within him. As he spoke, however, he was conscious that a curious change had come upon the face of the tall man—an expression of mingled amusement and perplexity.

"Revolution?" said he. "Republic? My dear man, what are you trying to put over? You're going to get out of the limits of this little republic just as quickly as we can get to a boat. And you're going to reach your dear United States just as quickly as——"

It was Henneker's turn for surprise.

"What!" he interrupted, "you mean that——"

"Look here, Henneker," said the tall man, in a tone of serious appreciation, "you're the best bluffer I've ever seen,

and you're clever, too—but what's the use? You'll need more than that to explain away that little hundred and ten thousand of Pritchard, Lippman's, though it was slick work."

Henneker's nerves lost their control. A crushing weight of amazement, paralyzing and profound, settled upon him like death.

"What!" he cried, in a high, tense voice. "You're——"

"Just kidnaping you back to Savannah," returned the fellow easily, "where you're going to be arrested on Pritchard, Lippman's complaint, for a little matter of that one hundred and ten thousand dollars. And you're caught with the goods on!"

TO BE CONTINUED.

The next section of this serial will appear in the November mid-month TOP-NOTCH, *out October 15th.*

The Passing of a Great Navigator

FROM the white man's point of view, Australia is a new country. But so swiftly has she developed her settlements into cities that to a present-day citizen of Sydney or Melbourne the landing of Captain Cook on her southern shores must seem "ages ago," indeed. The death of that great navigator took place on the fourteenth of February, 1779, on the coast of Hawaii. The circumstances were these:

In mid-January he had put in to a certain large bay in that island, and had been received by the natives with such extraordinary friendliness—they well-nigh overwhelmed him with gifts, and treated him almost as superhuman—that when, two days later, his ship was caught in a gale, and badly knocked about, he turned back without hesitation to refit in that harbor of pleasant memories.

To everybody's surprise, no welcome awaited them. No crowds rushed down to the shore to greet the returning vessel. The shore itself seemed deserted. What did it all mean? The sager heads on board were shaken ominously. "Better quit," said some.

The local chief put in an appearance next day, with many protestations of good faith and good will, and after his visit the natives came crowding round the ship, as on the previous occasion. But when the shattered mast was carried ashore for repair, they tried to pilfer tools, clothing—anything they could get their hands on. Finally they stole the six-oared boat lying alongside the ship.

Cook was greatly incensed at this last theft. He resolved to go ashore with an armed party, seize the chief, and keep him a prisoner on board till the missing cutter should be brought back. The device nearly succeeded, but presently an impulse of fear and suspicion seized the crowd, and they pressed threateningly on the seamen. A native brandished his spear in Cook's face, and suddenly a hail of stones began.

Menaced by such great odds, and always just and merciful in his relations with the natives, Cook gave orders to make for the boats. In the rush, he was smitten heavily with a club, and half fell, his musket dropping from his grasp. Staggering to his feet, he was again struck down, this time by a savage armed with an iron dagger.

He had reached the water's edge, and the natives sprang upon him, and forced his face down to drown him. He writhed free of their grasp, and was gazing appealingly toward the boats, when the club of a savage smote him down for the last time.

Just a week later his men, having recovered his body, horribly gashed and bruised, gave it fitting funeral, with all honor, in the depths of the sea whose paths he had traversed so freely and so daringly ever since he was a boy.

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